

40.

E X T R A C T S
F R O M T H E
D I A R Y, M E D I T A T I O N S
A N D
L E T T E R S
O F
Mr. JOSEPH WILLIAMS
O F
K I D D E R M I N S T E R,
WHO DIED DECEMBER 21, 1755, AGED 63-

*The Righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.—
The memory of the Just is blessed.—He being dead,
yet speaketh. Ps. cxii. 6. Prov. x. 7. Heb. xi. 4.*

S H R E W S B U R Y .

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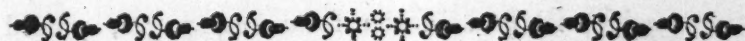
M D C C L X X I X .

ERRATA.

P. 152, l. 4. for *flow*, read *glow*.

278, l. 1. for *congratilate*, read *congratulate*.





T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE private papers of Mr. *Joseph Williams* would have been published long ago, if the desires of many of his friends could have been gratified. Though the *publisher* was for many years favoured with Mr. *Williams's* intimate friendship, and well knew that his *diary* and *meditations* were voluminous, yet he had no opportunity of perusing them till twenty-two years after the decease of the excellent writer. His widow would never suffer them to go out of her hands, during the four years in which she survived him. And after her death, his three daughters, whom providence had placed at a great distance from each other, having agreed to enjoy the *manuscript* by turns, were so eager to extend their separate privilege from year to year, as absolutely to prevent others from sharing with them in their satisfaction. Dm

Such of Mr. *Williams's* writings as were published in his life-time, were anonymous. There are three poetical compositions of his in the *Gentleman's*

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Magazine

Magazine for 1736, under fictitious names, which the reader will find in the following pages, placed in the order of time, to which all these extracts are reduced.

D In 1740, Mr. *Williams* published a pamphlet, entitled, *The principal causes of some late divisions in dissenting churches traced to their origin, in a letter from a dissenter in the country.* He submitted his manuscript to the critical inspection of Dr. *Watts*, and made some considerable additions to it at the Doctor's request.

D In 1748, came out his *Abridgment of the Rev. David Brainerd's journal among the Indians*, with Dr. *Doddridge's dedication* of it, *To the honourable society in Scotland for propagating christian knowledge*, in which the Doctor represents the compiler as "determined to conceal his name."

It was certainly the farthest from Mr. *Williams's* intention, that his *diary* and *meditations* should be published after his death, and with his name. His first copy of them was in *short-hand*, which none of his relations were able to read; but he himself wrote an abridgment of it in *long-hand*, for the use, as he expressly mentioned, of his children and their descendants; and which is now made publick at the request of his only surviving daughter, his numerous grand-children, and many other of his near relations.

The title of extracts is given to the following pages,

P R E F A C E.

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pages, because it was necessary to omit many things, even in Mr. *Williams's* abridged copy, that either related to the private concerns of particular persons, families, and religious societies, or that were merely of a controversial nature. Indeed, for the greater part of the *following pages*, we are indebted to the kindness of some, who had been Mr. *Williams's* correspondents, or who happened to have any of his *letters* or other writings in their possession.

What is here presented to the *reader*, contains a comprehensive review of a life devoted to God from early to advanced age, from about *seven* years old to his entrance on his *sixty-fourth* year. Almost every year, in so long a period, affords a distinct date to some instructive or entertaining particulars; each of which is placed in the order of time, as that appeared, on the whole, to be the most eligible arrangement. By this means a more just idea of Mr. *Williams's* real character may be formed, than could have been by a *funeral sermon*, where flattery is so often introduced, that the simplicity of the most obvious truth is ready to be suspected. To such truth the *publisher* apprehended himself strictly to adhere, when immediately returning from his *friend's* grave, he endeavoured, in a discourse from these words of the Apostle, *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*, to hold him up to the imitation of surrounding multitudes, as
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an example of eminent piety, whether we viewed him—in his own house, or—in the house of God, or—in his transacting the affairs of trade, or—in his zeal for promoting the honour of God and the interest of Christ in the world. Important as such particulars were, in their peculiar reference to Mr. *Williams*, yet the *publisher* is well-persuaded, that these *extracts* are much better calculated to satisfy and improve every mind, not excepting those who were personally acquainted with the deceased, and who recollect his genius, learning and retentive memory, his various reading, and distinguishing faculty for entertaining and profiting all that conversed with him.

Here, it is humbly hoped, christians of very different attainments in the divine life, whether weak or strong in faith; whether engaged in painful conflicts with their spiritual enemies, or triumphing over them; may see reason to conclude, that *as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.*—Here the men of trade and worldly business may learn the perfect consistence between the duties of life and of godliness, between their minding earth and making sure of heaven, and how absurd and iniquitous it is, to *make light of religion*, and go *their ways* in the neglect of it, *one to his farm, another to his merchandise*. They may here perceive, how rational and scriptural it is, to *acknowledge God in all their ways,*

ways, and thereby turn success or disappointment, prosperity or adversity, into occasions of greater nearness and devotedness to God, more cordial delight in him, and fuller enjoyment of him.—Here the lovers of learning and science may trace the labours necessary for attaining self-knowledge.—Here the proud and passionate may discern, that the difficulties of *being clothed with humility*, and of *putting on the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*, are not insurmountable.—Here the indolent and slothful have a convincing proof, that *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*.—Here they *who did run well*, but were easily hindered, that they *should not obey the truth*, are taught, both the duty and happiness, of being *steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*.—Here doubting and trembling souls, with all their load of perplexity and uneasiness concerning their eternal state, have before them an example of one, who, in some seasons of his life, exactly resembled themselves; though, at other times, he *rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.—Here parents and heads of families are prompted to try themselves, whether they are manifesting their own piety by earnest endeavours to *form Christ in* their children and servants, and what disinterested, zealous and prudent measures they are pursuing for the present and everlasting happiness of the next generation,

generation, that when they themselves die, their successors may *arise up, and call them blessed.*— Even the most devout and heavenly minds will here have the pleasure to see, what they themselves feel, that Mr. *Williams* never thought himself *already perfect*, but was ever restless in his desires and endeavours to love God more ardently, to have greater zeal and success in doing good to others, and that he himself *might win Christ, and be found in him.*

These histories of pious reflection, these devout exercises of the heart, while they were in manuscript, were blessed as the means of beginning piety in some, and of reviving it in others, of Mr. *Williams's* descendants. May divine grace assist readers of every age and character, of every condition and relation, so to improve them, as to *be followers of him, who through faith and patience inherits the promises.*

Kidderminster,
March 16, 1779.

B. FAWCETT.

N. B. The head of Mr. *Williams* is done from an original painting, in the possession of Mrs. *Penn*, at Kidderminster, his eldest and only surviving daughter.



EXTRACTS

FROM THE

DIARY, MEDITATIONS, &c.



His early piety. 1699. 1702.

THE first serious impressions I remember to have been made upon my mind, were, when I was about *seven years old*, occasioned by the death of a boy in another family. My father coming into my room, told me who was dead, and very seriously discoursed to me on the immortality of the soul, the certainty of a state of rewards and punishments, my own mortality and liableness every day to have such a change pass on me by death. I was greatly surprized, and filled with a warm concern for the salvation of my soul. It put me on praying with greater earnestness than common, and I was resolved to do the will of God, so far as I knew it.

When I was about *ten years old*, my father corrected me with a just severity for telling and persisting in a deliberate lie. He at length conquered my stubbornness, and brought me to confess the truth. His rebukes, reasonings and expostulations wrought

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on

on me such a sense of shame, that his words wounded me deeper than his stripes, and melted me into very tender relentings. "Now, said he, I forgive you, but I cannot promise you that God will forgive you; and if he should not forgive you, this one sin is enough to condemn you to eternal misery. But this I will do for you, I will pray that God will forgive you; and I charge you to go into your chamber, and pray earnestly to God for pardon." Accordingly I went, and on my bended knees, with a flood of tears, begged for Christ's sake the pardon of all my sins, and particularly this great sin I had just been guilty of. When I had thus spent almost a quarter of an hour, I rose up somewhat comforted, and the impression abode on my mind many days, so that my prayers were with more fervency than usual, and I was so ashamed, that I could scarce look at my father, or any of the family.

It pleased God to take away by death one of my little sisters, when I was in my *thirteenth year*. My father, after morning family-prayer, said something to us suitable to the sorrowful and awful occasion, and gave us some directions how to improve the providence. I felt myself strongly inclined to get into some place of retirement, to meditate upon death. It was a remote corner of the stable, where, in the most solemn and best manner I could, I sometimes mused on death, and on my own mortality, sometimes prayed to be made ready to die. My affections were engaged, and very lively convictions I had of the vanity of the world, and its insufficiency to my real happiness. An interest in Christ then appeared to me better than all the world, and some

earnest

earnest desires and breathings after Christ I then experienced.

After I had been some time at my father's trade, my mind was too much corrupted by the filthy conversation of the shop-men. Our minister coming to see my father, directed his discourse to me, taking notice what a comfort it was to parents to see their children take good ways, and what a grief of heart it must be to them to see them disobedient and addicted wholly to play. He then gave me to understand, that formerly my parents had entertained good hopes of me; but now, as I grew older and bigger, they justly expected that I should grow better, and what a sad thing it was I should grow worse and worse. Some other gentle reproofs he applied to me, which left stings behind them, and wrought kindly on me, and for a while brought forth some good fruits in my heart and life.

In my *sixteenth year* I began to weave in the clothier's broad loom, with a man who was an early riser and close worker, so that I commonly wrought with him 14, and sometimes 15 or 16 hours a day. This prevented my opportunity for, and suppressed my immoderate love to play. Often on Lord's-days, I had serious impressions on my mind, which remained with me all the Monday morning. But my continual labour in the loom, and the vain discourse which filled my ears, together with the vanity of my depraved heart, too much wore out all impressions of serious piety before Monday night, and all the rest of the week I was vain enough. I laboured at the loom two years, and before I left it, my convictions were deeper, and my resolutions stronger for serving

God ; so that it grieved me to have no time in the morning for secret prayer, which was partly owing to my fellow-labourer rising so early, and partly to half of my breakfast hour being taken up in attending on family-prayer. However, my Lord's-day's convictions had such an influence on my mind, that, for two or three days after, I commonly redeemed time for prayer, either from sleep, or from meals. Towards the latter end of the week my zeal usually began to cool, and my prayers to be formal and lifeless; till on the next Lord's day my convictions, both of sin and duty, were renewed. Thus I went on for many months, keeping my ground, but, alas! making slow advances in the work of religion.

After entering into my *eighteenth year*, and changing my daily employment for that, which allowed me more time for religious duties, my convictions of sin and humiliation for it increased. I was more enlarged in secret prayer, and so filled with a sense of the greatness and majesty of God, that frequently I was scarce conscious to a wandering thought in that duty. As I then worked in a shop with three journeymen, I found their conversation very irksome to me, because I made conscience of my thoughts and words. But though I came from prayer to the shop, resolved not to hearken to their discourse, but to keep my heart fixed on God and heavenly things all the day ; yet, after a while, the gaiety of my natural temper would betray me, first into free, and by degrees into vain conversation. This much retarded my progress in piety, and filled me with remorse and grief every evening. At length I prevailed with my father to let me work in a chamber by myself, but was ashamed to tell the reason. Being
thus

thus alone, I endeavoured to keep my heart all the day bent on religion. To this end I contrived to set *Mason's Hymns*, or some other devotional book, so near me, that with little or no hinderance to my work, I could, by glancing my eye upon it, take in a line or two at a time. In this manner I committed to memory all *Mason's Hymns*, and with such a devout frame, that I could adopt almost every line in them, even his *Song of praise for grace, for deliverance from spiritual enemies, for answers to prayers, and for joy in the Holy Ghost*, as the genuine language of my own soul. I found my will so changed, from what it had been, that I entertained a very comfortable hope I was *renewed in the spirit of my mind*, and frequently I had not only *peace*, but *joy in believing*.

About this time, in the year 1710, I was walking in a summer evening in the meadows, and fell into a solemn meditation. *While I was musing, the fire burned*, so that I could not but *speak with my tongue*. I discoursed to myself on the shortness and uncertainty of life, my own mortality, and the wide difference between an eternity of happiness and misery. I had such a sense of the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell, as made all the beauties of this lower creation to disappear, and all worldly riches and honours not worthy to be compared with securing my great concern, the salvation of my soul. I wondered how men could spend all their time in labouring and caring for things, which they must quickly leave, while they neglected the salvation of their souls. I wondered how people could so generally allow themselves to think, and talk of nothing but the trifling affairs of this life. I wondered at myself, that I should spend so much of

my time hitherto to so little purpose. I wondered at my father, though a good man, and my faithful monitor, that he had not warned me oftener, and more earnestly, of the danger I was in of perishing for ever. I was glad to find in myself such a lively sense of invisible things. In this temper of mind I could almost say with *Elihu*, in wishing for an opportunity to pray, *I am full of matter, my belly is as new wine that hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed.* The dusk of the evening, and the solitary place I was then in, afforded me a sufficient retreat. Sometimes kneeling, sometimes prostrate, I there poured out my soul before the Lord, and there I received an inward witness, that I was a child of God. I was even ravished with the love of Christ. I was in the Apostle's *strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which I then esteemed far better.* I was ready to say with *Peter*, *It is good to be here.* And with *Jacob*, *This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven.* It left a devout serenity on my mind, which continued many days.

On a Lord's-day morning, Sept. 10, 1710, I awoke in a serious frame, lamenting my many defects and short-comings in duty, and that, after such lively convictions, I had made so little progress in the religious life. I rose with a resolution, by the grace of God, to do somewhat to put the grand concern out of doubt, to prevent my returning to sin, and to bind myself for ever to the Lord. Accordingly I went immediately up into my closet, and having solemnly devoted myself to God in secret prayer, I wrote down my *self-consecration*. “ I solemnly devoted and dedi-

“ cated

cated myself to him, who is the King of Kings,
resolving, by his grace, to give a bill of divorce
to all manner of sins, and to the utmost of my
power to strive and wrestle with all temptations to
sin, whether from without, or from within; to
avoid (as far as possible) the society of vain grace-
less persons; to commend myself to God by prayer,
at least twice a day; to be careful and constant in
self-examination, and meditation, particularly on
the love, the transcendent love of God in Christ,
and of Christ in willingly offering up himself a sa-
crifice for poor sinners, and in sending the blessed
Spirit, whose strivings and quickening motions I
resolved, by the grace of God, never to quench.
I resolved to watch narrowly against the wanderings
and strayings of my heart in any duty; to make
the glory of God, and the salvation of my soul,
my chief business and design; and to account the
affairs of this world but as diversions to me in my
way heaven-ward." This is the substance of what
I then recorded as my solemn vow, determining from
thenceforward to call myself daily to account for the
actions of the day, and frequently to write some re-
marks thereon. This course was of excellent use, to
keep me close to God and duty, to prevent sin, and
particularly helped me to redeem precious time, for
I made conscience of rising early.

About this time, going with my father a few miles
from home, his talk with me was very profitable.
He exhorted me to serious religion now in my youth,
as the season when the mind is most fit to receive good
impressions. He cautioned me not to put off the
grand concern to an uncertain hereafter. He pleaded

with me, not only the uncertainty of life, but the improbability of my turning to God in old age, after vicious habits were grown strong by a long continuance in sin. And to affect me the more, he gave me the following particulars of his conversation with a gentleman of his acquaintance. “ I was coming home, “ said he, one evening not long after I was married “ from ————— in company with this gentleman and his son. It seems they had been sitting “ some hours with persons remarkable for their persecuting principles, and who had been throwing “ out severe reflections against the Dissenters. Though “ the old gentleman never came himself to Meeting, “ except when he was at *London*; yet he had a high “ esteem for Dissenters, and had courage enough on “ all occasions strenuously to vindicate their conscientious character and practice. He now addressed the company with some warmth of resentment, and told them,—Gentlemen, you may be “ ashamed thus to abuse better men than yourselves, “ men far more conscientious, and who live much “ better lives than either you or I do; men who “ make religion their daily business, and dare not “ allow themselves in those liberties of an immoral “ kind which you and I do.—After he had related “ to me these particulars, he then directed his discourse to his son.—Son, said he, though I have “ not myself been so religious and careful of my soul “ as I should have been, yet I cannot but have a “ tender concern for your everlasting happiness, and “ here, before Mr. *Williams*, I admonish you, not “ to live after my example, but keep close to such “ persons as the Dissenters, and make them your “ companions.

“ companions. I have often advised you to make
“ this man your associate ; he will lead you in the
“ way to heaven. You are got in with a knot of
“ young fellows, who will do you no good ; but I
“ charge you” (which he uttered with a louder
voice) “ to leave off the company of such and such,
“ and spend all the time you can in the company of
“ this neighbour.—To which I replied, Sir, I am
“ now full of business, and am much older than
“ your son, and therefore young men of his own
“ age are more fit for him to associate with.—On my
“ saying this, he stopped his horse, I being before
“ him, and his son behind, and with great earnest-
“ ness declared, I will not stir from this place, until
“ you have promised me to abandon that set of com-
“ panions, and make this man your daily associate.
“ Mind religion, religion, in your youth, and do
“ not do as I have done. I have slighted many con-
“ victions, and now my heart is hard and brawny.”

I was in a manner thunderstruck with the old gentleman's last words, and though my father went on to relate more that he there uttered, and the promise his son made him before he would stir a step farther, yet my thoughts were wholly swallowed up in deep musing on those words, “ My heart is hard and
“ brawny.” I had such an affecting sense of the old gentleman's dreadful state, that it engaged my mind all the rest of the way, and, even while I was transacting business, it was still uppermost, and his words were ever sounding in my ears. Thus I was kept long in a very serious frame, and was possessed with a most alarming fear lest I should fall into such a state, which I considered as the greatest plague that

could be inflicted upon me. In this temper of mind I returned home, keeping my thoughts all the way intent upon the sad and solemn subject. *While I was thus musing, the fire burned, my heart was hot within me,* and using a low voice, I kept up a ferious soliloquy on the most important concerns of my soul, and the impression did not wear off a considerable time.

Not many weeks after this, as I was walking in the church-yard, I began to muse on the antiquity of the church, and put this question, What is now become of all the builders of this stately fabric? This led me seriously to consider the different states of the dead. I considered the many generations of mankind, that had entered upon the stage of this world, had acted their part, and gone off from it. I considered also, that an utter end is put to their sensual pleasures and delights. Some of them were rich and great, high and honourable, others were poor and despised, oppressed with labour and poverty; but now death hath thrown down all that difference and distinction. As is the poor, so also is the rich. The meanness of the one, and the grandeur of the other, is equally forgotten. Yea, the remembrance of them, except a few, is perished from the earth. But what is become of their souls, their immortal part? They are gone into the world of spirits, *and their works have followed them.* What they sowed here, that they are now reaping, and will be reaping to eternity. I then considered, how little it would avail me, whether I were high or low, rich or poor, in this life, which is so short and transitory, and how much it concerned me to secure my soul's everlasting happiness.

ness. I had then such a clear affecting sight of the vanity of this world, that I could not but wonder how people could busy themselves so much about it, as to neglect their souls. I wondered at the parish-clerks in particular, who were present at so many burials, how they could neglect to prepare for their own death. I sought a place to pray in, and got behind one of the buttresses of the church, and there poured out my soul to God in earnest cries, for his grace, to enable me to live above the world, and to prepare me for a happy eternity. I came home with my thoughts so full of eternity, that I did not care to think or speak of any thing else all that evening.

In the beginning of the winter of 1710, at the edge of a night on which our workmen have an annual feast, and for which purpose they were gathering about the door, I was led to think, what poor joys those of the world are, how low and mean, how transient and of short continuance. I immediately withdrew into the meadows. It being a clear sky, the majestic canopy of the heavens, bespangled with numberless stars, elevated my groveling mind to contemplate the superior glories of the great author of this stupendous fabrick. I considered, that what I beheld was but the porch, or rather some more remote appendage to the heaven of heavens. If then the porch made such a glittering show, how radiant must the palace itself be? I contemplated a while, as well as I could, the glories of heaven, and my mind was wrapt up with ambitious desires after a mansion there. I then returned, and stealing up in the dark into a chamber, I earnestly prayed, and went down to the company; but the serious impressions abode on my

mind all the evening, and especially prevented that gaiety, which on such occasions I was used to discover.

It was soon after this, I contracted an intimacy with a young man. We walked together, and talked on the advantages of early piety and serious godliness.

u/ We agreed to meet often for such like conference, and for many years after there was scarce a week passed, in which he did not visit me, or I him. He seemed to make a vigorous progress, both in knowledge and piety, and was often of great service to me, as Mr. *Baxter* writes of his bosom friend.

“He warm’d me with his zeal, when I was cold,

“And my remissness lovingly controul’d.

“For such a friend I had. Though after all,

“Himself became my warning by his fall;

“As one or two have done since then,

“Shewing, if grace withdraws, we are but men.”

This very passage we several times read together, and were equally at a loss to know, whether Mr. *Baxter* meant it of his friend’s totally falling away, or only for a time. We thought it could not be, that a person coming up to the character there given, could utterly fall. I little thought then, that my friend, who seemed fully to come up to that character, should, in a course of some years, so apostatize, as to become a common drunkard. Let this be a caution to me, and likewise a motive to thankfulness. *Thou standest by faith, be not high minded, but fear. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

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His growth in piety.

AUGUST 4, 1717. To this day, I have had my ups and downs in religion. Sometimes, lively workings of grace, holy fear and watchfulness, fervent love, warm desires, and, sometimes, a comfortable hope. At other times, I have given way to levity and vanity of mind, which brought on remissness in duty, and even a neglect of it, till recovered by deep repentance. My father having communicated to me of late some frowns of providence in his temporal affairs, this discovery produced in me a very humble, resigned frame to the divine dispensations, and in some measure prepared me for divine comforts, under the sermons I have heard to day, being our sacrament day. Christ's love to souls, was the subject of discourse. Never had I experienced such a flame of divine love, as was then kindled in me. The word came to me with life and power. The Lord shone in upon my soul with the enlightening and enlivening rays of his Holy Spirit, drawing out faith and love into lively exercise, exciting admiration and adoration of his wonderful and stupendous love, and gave me some well-grounded assurance of his special love to me, and that I am a child of God. The good effects were manifest, both in the frame of my heart, and in the government of my life, long after.

In the November following was a *day of humiliation*. I had purposed to spend such days aforetime

time in a solemn manner, both in publick, and in private. But on this, for the first time, I spent all the morning in secret prayer, self-examination, meditation, and self-dedication. Afterward I attended the whole public service, which lasted *six hours*, and found myself more lively than common in every part of it, and for many weeks reaped great benefit to my soul from that day's employment.

His father's death.

MY dear and honoured father died May 2, 1719. His memory is blessed, and will be for ever dear and precious to me. In him I lost, not merely a loving father and friend, but a wise and able counsellor, a faithful guardian and monitor, and an excellent pattern of sobriety, watchfulness, self-denial and diligence, particularly in his heavenly calling. He redeemed a great deal of time from his bed, rising commonly by four, and spending two or three hours, till the family rose, in reading, meditation and prayer. He was a man of a hot, passionate temper, but through his great watchfulness, and close walking with God, it very seldom broke out; on the contrary, he was remarkable for his meekness, calmness and affability. As he lived generally beloved by persons of all denominations, so he died much lamented. I have great reason to bless God I had such a father. O that I might more and more copy his excellent virtues! His death greatly impressed my mind, and roused me out of that spirit
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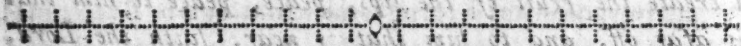
of sloth and slumber, into which my intended marriage had betrayed me. Upon serious reflections, I became sensible of the great loss I had sustained, was deeply humbled for my sad neglects of secret religion, and renewed my resolutions for a more constant, conscientious discharge of the several duties of secret prayer, meditation and self-examination. For a while I acted agreeably to such resolves; but, alas! the world had got possession of my heart, so that I too soon returned to my former carelessness.



His dread of hypocrisy.

AUGUST 8, 1720. What a sad discovery have I made of the hypocrisy of my heart? What purposes did I form some time ago? But, alas! I have no mind to go on with the duties to which I resolved. How soon did I shake off the affecting sense of my resolutions? How soon did they lose their force upon me? I could well enough satisfy myself in the neglect of secret duty, while I keep up family-prayer and reading the scriptures. O dreadful hypocrisy! O deplorable state that I am in! O that I knew and sufficiently considered my danger of perishing for ever! I fear I never had the graces of God's Spirit in sincerity. I fear mine was only a superficial repentance and conversion, and all my religion but a profession, and all my joys in God and Christ but delusive elevations. Woe is me! Satan leads me about, and makes me his easy prey, and yet I am not affected therewith. My wretched lusts,
which

which used to lord it over me, are yet unsubdued. Over and above all this, I find the world hath got fast rooting in my soul, and what will become of me I know not. I fear, after all my profession, the doom of the unprofitable servant will be mine, *Bind his hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, into weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.*—Yesterday I joined with those who renewed their covenant at the Lord's-table. Methought I would have done it sincerely; but O how unaffected was my soul in every part of the duty! neither humbled for sin! nor praising God for his mercy and love in Christ Jesus! nor exercising faith, or any other grace! I could do nothing. O wretched, deplorable state! *Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?*



His hope of sincerity.

APRIL 23, 1721. Blessed be God, who hath of late wrought in me a greater concern for my eternal welfare, than for a considerable time before. I hope the Lord hath been at work on my soul this day. I have for a long time entertained jealousies of myself, lest hypocrisy should reign in my heart. Reading, to day, in *Fenner's treatise of the affections*, the Lord was graciously pleased to rouse me, in examining the state of my soul by the pulse of my affections, and to fill me with jealousy lest I am yet an hypocrite, lest all my religious profession be mere shew, or shadow, without the substance. The fearful

ful apprehension thereof greatly impressed my mind, and made me very penfive. I went up into my chamber, to ruminate on the state of my soul, where meeting with my wife, she would stay with me. I then told her my fears. She endeavoured to comfort me, when, alas! I wanted more to be excited and awakened. I went on charging myself, and expressing my fears, till the Lord was graciously pleased to warm my heart, and, I hope, in some measure to humble it. I thought, I should be glad, if I might possibly conceive, on good grounds, but some small hopes of mercy at the hand of God.—This evening, the Lord graciously prepared a comforting word for me, as he had before graciously prepared me for it. Our minister expounded *Isaiah lvii. 18, 19.* *I have seen his ways, and will heal him, I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.* The Lord was graciously pleased to raise my affections at the first hearing of the words, and to make the discourse suitable to my case, thereby to strengthen my hopes, that he will not quite cast me off, nor be angry for ever.



His graces strengthened.

OCTOBER 22, 1721. The desires of my soul have, of late, blessed be God, been more habitually after him; than for the greater part of my life. Though I have served him in much weakness, and

and with manifold imperfections ; yea, and many times omitted worshipping him in secret ; yea, and the love of this world stirring much in me (as my endeavours in my worldly calling appear to have a divine blessing) ; yet, I humbly hope, he stirs up in me desires to resist and overcome those workings of worldliness and covetousness, and to make me in earnest after the true riches. This day, it pleased God to stir up in me humble and earnest desires to meet him ; and, I hope, I experienced his assistance, this morning, both in secret and family-prayer. God was also pleased to send me, what was suitable and affecting in publick, when the minister *Besought us, by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.* I, immediately after, retired with a heart full, I humbly hope, of love and praise, blessing God for the impressions that were thereby made upon my soul. What sorrow for sin, and for my habitual corruptions, while, with much weeping, I was led to reflect on the many sins of my youth and riper years ! My passion of weeping was wound up, I think, to as high a pitch as ever I remember on any occasion. But O the pleasure I felt, when God was pleased, through that storm of grief, to whisper peace and pardon to my soul ! O how was I made to humble myself before God ! How did he shew me my own unworthiness and nothingness, and make me wonder there was any hope for such a worm !

His losses in trade.

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LORD's-day, June 6, 1725. After many years of prosperity, it pleased God to exercise me with great losses this year, to almost the whole of my capital in trade. But they were blessed to my great advantage in spiritual things, and made an occasion and means of clearing up my interest in the love of God, and my title to eternal life, for which I had long before been labouring in vain by close examination and earnest prayer. While my mind was very apprehensive of the fatal consequences that might attend these overwhelming losses, I went into my closet, and read *Flavel's Saint indeed*, particularly his *directions, how to keep the heart in time of adversity*. It pleased God, so to bless that good man's advice in such a case, and so to set it home upon my soul, that I was brought into a most submissive, resigned frame. It quite stilled the storm, and produced a perfect calm. I was thoroughly convinced that there was honey in the rod, and that God was doing me good, and not evil, by this chastisement. I was particularly convinced, that this was sent in answer to my prayers. I had often bewailed a proud, earthly heart, and had begged for humility and heavenly-mindedness. I was convinced, that no means could be more likely to obtain such a blessed temper, than impoverishing providences. I had often prayed, that God would *hedge up my way*, rather than suffer me to be proud and carnal. I concluded

cluded God was now doing it, and that the issue of all would be gracious.

Lord's-day, July 11, 1725. I greatly hope my kind and gracious God hath been pleased to bless this affliction to my spiritual benefit. He hath thereby brought my soul into a more resigned frame, and made me more solicitous about my interest in himself, *that good part which can never be taken from me.* He hath discovered so much love in this providence, as makes me even rejoice in it, and bless him for it. The *sermons* I have been hearing, on those words, *Thou art my portion, O Lord!* administered great comfort and joy to my soul. I have more chearful hope, that I have chosen God for my portion, and that this affliction is so far blessed to me, as to make the frame of my spirit more serious, and to enable me to engage in every religious duty with greater fervency, and to labour after a more close walking with God. O gainful loss! O wondrous grace! *How are all his ways mercy and truth! In very faithfulness doth he afflict.* He reserves his cordials for his children in their greatest straits and difficulties. Let me still hope and trust in thee, O my God, and not return to vanity, earthliness, or pride any more; but keep me humble and serious, and let my soul ever bless thee.

Friday, July 16, 1725. O how wise and gracious is my heavenly Father! How sweetly doth he overrule afflictive and disappointing providences to my great advantage and comfort! Surely I find my heart improving and growing hereby in submission to the will of God, delight in God, and in duty. Surely I am enabled to love God more, not only by means

of

of this trial, but even for it. In prayer, this morning, my soul was drawn out in love and praise, and my affections sweetly stirred. Blessed be God.

Saturday, July 17, 1725. Having for a considerable time been reading *Baxter's Saints Rest*, though never so constantly every morning, as since my losses in trade, I am now come to his arguments for, and directions in the heavenly work of *Meditation*, and am greatly excited to engage in it daily. I began, this evening, for the first time, to walk abroad to meditate; and though I have cause to bewail a backward, careless, earthly heart, yet, blessed be God, my labour (I humbly hope) was not lost. I did experience some raisedness of affection, some drawing forth of desire, *some comfort of hope*.

About the beginning of November, 1725, some aggravating circumstances were added to my late losses in trade, upon which I again had recourse to *Flavel's directions, how to keep the heart in time of adversity*. God was pleased, by reading and prayer, to support my soul, and to assure me it was from love, from covenant love, he thus exercised me. My distress was relieved. I was enabled with faith and patience to *cast my burden upon the Lord*, upon his wisdom and directing providence. I was particularly led to renew my resolutions to use and improve opportunities for *Meditation*. Accordingly, evening after evening, God is pleased to ravish my soul with the joyful prospect of future glory, and to draw out my longing desires after it, in such a manner and measure, as I never felt before.—Many times, since July 11, my desires to have God for my portion, were greatly excited. Fain would I have adopted the Psalmist's aspiration, but
durst

durst not. I tried it, day after day. It ran exceedingly in my mind for weeks. Whatever I was doing about my trade-affairs, this would be uppermost, O that I could say, *Thou art my portion, O Lord!* At last, finding that nothing less would satisfy the desires of my soul, and believing the Lord himself had stirred up these desires, and therefore if I was willing, he could not be unwilling; I ventured, though with a trembling heart, to say, *Thou art my portion, O Lord.* Thereupon joy, like a tide, came rolling in, and got possession of my soul. I was quickly able, in the confidence of faith, to repeat the aspiration. My mind is full of it, and it puts life and vigour into every grace.

November 10, 1725. In answer to a letter from my *Rev. Brother Pearfall*, in which he sympathized with me under my late losses, I wrote to him as follows.—“ I resent, with sincere gratitude, your kind
 “ concern for me, and tender sympathy with me,
 “ under those afflictions which an all-wise, infinitely
 “ gracious, loving, and I humbly hope, my beloved
 “ God and Father is in great mercy, and according
 “ to the directions of unerring wisdom, exercising
 “ me with, *who am less than the least of all his mercies*, unworthy of every mercy, and therefore unworthy of his correcting love. Shall I tell you?
 “ Are you not desirous to know how so heavy a stroke
 “ is borne? I cannot, without fear and jealousy, lest
 “ my apprehensions and fancy should exceed the reality
 “ of my faith and divine enjoyments, relate to you
 “ the temper of my mind, since I heard the tidings
 “ of my late disappointments. O that I could do
 “ it with a single eye to the glory of so good a God,
 “ and

“ and to the magnifying his ineffable grace and love !
“ Dear Brother, *I have all things, and abound.* I
“ have not suffered loss, but reaped the greatest gain.
“ *He hath shed abroad that love in my heart, which*
“ *is better than wine.* The tidings were at first some-
“ what surprising, the swelling billows began to toss
“ my mind and disturb my rest. But Oh, what se-
“ rene calm follows, when God speaks peace ! How
“ cheering are the smiles of his love ! How sweetly
“ did he persuade, and even assure my soul, that
“ by this cross providence he was faithfully pur-
“ suing the great end of electing love, and did order
“ this affliction as a means sanctified to that happy
“ end ! That *by this my iniquities should be purged,*
“ *and this should be the fruit thereof, 'to take away*
“ *sin,* to mortify my carnal affections, to wean me
“ from earth and sense, to strengthen my faith in
“ God, and every holy disposition, to lead me into
“ the secret of communion with him here, and to
“ ripen me for everlasting glory hereafter ! O how
“ did my heart, as well as my eyes, overflow with
“ joy, when he gave me the comforting evidence of
“ my interest in his favour, and in the merits of
“ Christ, shewed me my *name written in the Lamb's*
“ *book of life,* and gave me some foretastes of that
“ *fulness of joy, and those rivers of pleasure,* at the
“ fountain head of which the saints are solacing
“ themselves to eternal ages ! O how ravishing is
“ his beauty and glory ! If a transient glance in
“ this state of distance and imperfection be so trans-
“ porting, I had almost said, transforming, what
“ will it be to see him face to face, to dwell for
“ ever in his glorious presence, and look ourselves
“ into

“ into his very likeness? I could chearfully say with
 “ Dr. Watts,

“ My willing soul would stay
 “ In such a frame as this,
 “ And sit, and sing herself away
 “ To everlasting bliss.”

“ Could I repine, think you, at providence? Nay,
 “ could I so much as grieve? Was there any place
 “ left for sorrow in my heart? No. Sorrow was at
 “ once banished from my mind, and joy and glad-
 “ ness put into full possession. Thus more than once
 “ hath my heavenly Father visited me; for *he is af-*
 “ *licted in all our afflictions*, and reserves his choicest
 “ cordials for the seasons of our greatest dejection
 “ and fainting.—What wisdom too shines forth in
 “ this providence? Upon reflection I find, according
 “ to your penetrating hints, that though I did, I
 “ trust, own the hand of God in the former loss,
 “ and could bless a taking as well as a giving God;
 “ yet I *despised the chastening of the Lord*. Or, if I
 “ were in any measure *humbled under the mighty hand*
 “ *of God*, yet I am sure I did too soon forget it; of
 “ which I was not wholly insensible, and often chid
 “ my stupid soul on account thereof. And though
 “ I do believe I have been the better for it ever
 “ since, yet the desired end was but partially and
 “ very imperfectly answered. My fervour began to
 “ cool. I began to remit my diligent attendance to
 “ secret duties, and particularly solemn, stated *Me-*
 “ *ditation*; for the conscientious discharge of which
 “ that disappointment had strengthened my resolu-
 “ tion. A duty this, which I would earnestly re-
 “ commend

" commend to all that desire to live a life of com-
 " munion with God, as they value spiritual peace,
 " comfort and joy.—And O! what goodness, mild-
 " ness, and gentleness doth my heavenly Father
 " discover in this providence? Perhaps he is only
 " shaking the rod over me, that thereby he might
 " more deeply impress former impressions. For I
 " am not without hopes, that in the issue I shall
 " sustain little or no loss in my outward estate.
 " What kindness doth my heavenly Father shew, by
 " inclining good ~~to lend me a sup-~~ to lend me a sup-
 " porting hand in this exigence? Surely I must not
 " overlook the goodness of God therein, at the same
 " time that I owe very great obligations to ———,
 " who of his own accord, and unasked, became my
 " surety. I am encompassed round with mercies,
 " which way soever I look, or bend my thoughts.
 " O how admirably is justice chequered with mercy?
 " How endearing the methods of the sovereign grace
 " of God, to bring us to himself?—But I fear
 " pride hath too much a hand in dictating. O this
 " cursed pride! I am sensible my temper is very
 " much addicted to it. O that God would heal me
 " of this sin of pride! Would *hide it from me*, that
 " I might take root in humility, and thereby grow
 " more stable and stedfast in the ways of God! O
 " that this providence may be blessed to the curing
 " a vain, earthly mind, and a hard, unbelieving
 " heart, and every other spiritual disease!

" Then shall I sing, O happy rod,
 " That brought me nearer to my God!"

" But I fear, I justly fear, I shall again be ensnared

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" by

“ by this tempting, deceitful world. Dear Brother,
 “ help me by your prayers, help me by your farther
 “ instructions,” &c.

Lord's-day, December 26, 1725. Still an all-wise God, whom, unworthy as I am, I hope I may call my God, my gracious and merciful God and Father, is exercising me with farther and greater trials, in consequence of my former losses, and by which they are rendered more aggravated than I could have imagined. Amidst all these distresses I can, through abounding grace, say with Dr. *Watts*,

“ Should earth against my soul engage,
 “ And hellish darts be hurl'd,
 “ Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
 “ And face a frowning world.
 “ Let cares like a wild deluge come,
 “ And storms of sorrow fall ;
 “ May I but safely reach my home,
 “ My God, my heaven, my all !”

However, I would be found diligently preparing for the worst that can come. Therefore, whatever God hath already permitted, and even though he should permit the worst I can fear, these are my purposes, by the grace of God enabling me.

First, I do, and will endeavour to justify God in all. *He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* Perhaps he is calling my sins to remembrance, and chastening me for former follies, to humble me yet more, which is what my proud spirit greatly needs. I am very sensible, though I have not been duly humbled for it, that I have been too much in love with the world, and too much delighted
 with

with worldly prosperity, even lifted up by it. O that pride did not still find place in my heart, and mingle even with the patience I discover in bearing these trials of adversity! Lord, help me to lay myself low, as in the dust, before thee. Let me be able to say, Lord, thou hast overcome. O that this proud heart of mine were more effectually overcome, and bowed to thy will! O that it were purged of pride, and every sinful disposition, and made altogether such, as thou wouldest have it to be!

Secondly, I will endeavour to receive this, and every other affliction, which my heavenly Father is pleased to exercise me with, as coming from his hand, and by his direction, and therein to comfort myself, and rejoice, that it is my Father's good pleasure. Though I desire to mourn for my sins, which are the procuring cause of all my afflictions; yet will I rejoice, that all these afflictions are of my heavenly Father's appointing, *who will stay his rough wind in the day of the east-wind*, and will moderate my afflictions, I trust, if he see it best for me. How harsh and severe soever he may suffer them to be, I know and believe he can bring good out of them, and sanctify them to my spiritual and eternal good. Therefore,

Thirdly, I will endeavour quietly to submit to this, and every other affliction. I will bow to the scepter of divine grace, and patiently accept the punishment of my sin.

Fourthly, I will still hope in God, and repose my trust in him alone. *Yea, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I can do all this through Christ strengthening me.* But, O my God, one thing I

humbly beg, *take not thy Holy Spirit from me*, renew thy cordials, and furnish me with every grace, that I may hold out even unto death, and at last receive the crown of life.



A time of sickness and death.

NOVEMBER 16, 1726. Whilst I was sitting up with a dying friend, I writ to my Rev. Brother *Pearfall* the following lines.—“ Sure I cannot want a subject, now I am hearing the pantings of a poor, helpless, sick man, labouring for breath, and perhaps insensible of his own case. O what a privilege to be a christian! How safe is their state, of whom the Apostle testifies, *All things are your’s, whether life or death, or things present or things to come.* And again, *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, &c. shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* —In such a dying time, when our relations and intimate friends are sick and dying around us, we cannot but expect our own turn may be next. What an unspeakable pleasure is it, to have some comfortable hopes, some well-grounded confidence, that death, our last enemy, cannot hurt us? That his sting is taken away? That, through the conquest of our victorious Redeemer, we may triumph over him, as a disarmed, vanquished foe? That, however horrible his approaches are to nature, dissolving her frame, destroying the curious machine by which the soul acts in this state of imperfection, and

“ and putting an end to all sensual joys ; yet, through
“ the riches of divine grace, we can look by an over-
“ coming faith beyond these melancholy scenes, to
“ the glorious issue ; to that *rest which remains for*
“ *the people of God* ; to that prize for which we are
“ wrestling, striving, running, fighting ; that end of
“ all our duties, for which we have so long been
“ waiting and praying ; that joyful harvest, after a
“ weeping seed-time ; yea, that quiet haven, after a
“ dangerous, tempestuous voyage ? With what tran-
“ sporting joy might a lively faith and hope enable
“ the gracious soul to look on, and embrace, when
“ called to it, that which is the greatest aversion of
“ our nature ; because it puts a period to all our
“ sins and sorrows, to all the miseries we either feel
“ or fear, and introduces us to the beatific vision and
“ fruition of our God and Saviour, *whom having not*
“ *seen we love*, whose beaming glories shall conform
“ our souls to the image of our glorious Creator,
“ and shall finally *change these vile bodies, and fashion*
“ *them like to his own glorious body* ? Though it doth
“ not yet appear *what we shall be* ; yet we know that,
“ *when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we*
“ *shall see him as he is*. Can we forbear crying out
“ with the poet ?

“ O happy place ! When shall I be,

“ My God, with thee, to see thy face ?”

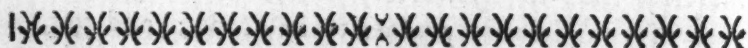
“ Though *to be present with the Lord*, is the primary
“ happiness of saints *absent from the body* ; yet to be
“ joined to an innumerable company of angels, and to
“ the general assembly and church of the first born,
“ *which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of*
“ just

“ *just men made perfect*, affords a delicious prospect.
 “ We shall then find, to our increasing joy, that our
 “ friends, *who sleep in Jesus*, and are dead out of
 “ our world, yet live. If we overtake them, to how
 “ great an advantage shall our acquaintance with
 “ them be renewed? In how much more refined a
 “ manner, than here we were wont, shall we join
 “ with them in adoring our Creator, Redeemer, and
 “ Sanctifier? With what ecstatic admiration shall we
 “ unite in celebrating the wisdom, power, and good-
 “ ness of the great Jehovah, which shine so bright to
 “ the inhabitants of that blessed world? With what
 “ triumphant exultations recount the wonders of re-
 “ deeming love, as well in the particular instances
 “ thereof to our own souls, as in its general display
 “ to the human race?—But I may well check my-
 “ self with, *Who is this that darkeneth counsel with*
 “ *words without knowledge?* How low, how inade-
 “ quate are my conceptions of that glory, which eye
 “ *hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered*
 “ *into the heart of man to conceive?* This we are sure
 “ of, that our joy shall be full and everlasting; and
 “ should not such a prospect reconcile us to death?
 “ Blessed then, for ever *blessed be the God and Father*
 “ *of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abun-*
 “ *dant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope of*
 “ *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth*
 “ *not away, reserved in heaven for us!* How should
 “ we rejoice in the grace in which we stand, and
 “ triumph in hope of the glory of God? How should
 “ we love the author and purchaser of all this hap-
 “ piness, and admire and adore rich and free grace,
 “ which chose us in Christ before the foundation of the
 “ world,

*"world, and saved us, not by works of righteousness,
"which we have done, but according to his mercy?
"Dear Brother, how infinite are our obligations to
"love the Lord?" &c.*

Lord's-day, November 20, 1726. God, my good and gracious Father, hath been pleased to appoint a merciful issue to my worldly losses, and to give me a year of considerable prosperity in trade; and yet, I humbly hope, my mind hath not been puffed up therewith, as formerly.—I am now called to observe the hand of God in an uncommon, malignant, epidemical fever, by which in this little town many have been cut off, twenty in one week, and eight were buried in one day. How shall I improve such awful providences? Shall I suffer the love of the world to fill my heart? May I not reasonably expect, that as I also am formed of the same brittle materials, my own turn may be near approaching? What remains then, but that as I have often, so now again, I solemnly give up myself to him, *whose I am*, and humbly resign up myself to his disposal? *Into thine hand I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* O fit me for thyself, and when thou pleasest, 'receive me to thy glory! Blessed be God, death doth not now appear terrible to me. But how it would appear in its nearest approaches, I cannot say. O that its sting were taken away, as I hope it is, that it may be safe, though it should not be comfortable! O that these awful dispensations may be sanctified to all concerned, to stir us up to *prepare to meet our God*, and better to improve our religious privileges, which are so distinguishing! Thrice happy they who are safe arrived above, far from this world

of care and strife, this abode of sin and sorrow, *and are ever present with the Lord!* Happy they too, who are sincerely the Lord's, and though sojourning yet in this vale of tears, have a clear title to a mansion in the new Jerusalem, and are daily preparing for those joys and glories that are to be revealed!



Thoughts on his eternal state.

AUGUST, 1726. Being on a journey to London, in a cross road between *Ailbury* and *Amerham*, my way lay close by a church-yard, where I saw a monument of a woman, whose age, when she died, was the same with my own, she and I being born the same month and year. This led me to consider.—What if it had been the divine appointment, that I had quitted this earthly tabernacle two years ago, as she did, where would death have landed me, and what state had I now been in? Would my departed spirit have fallen a prey to the devouring jaws of infernal fiends? O what terror would have seized me at their first appearance? What horror would have racked this trembling soul of mine, to find itself naked and defenceless under the power of merciless furies? In what a cruel and violent manner would they have dragged me to the prison of hell? With what contempt would they have ridiculed my folly, in squandering away my precious time, to pursue trifles, *and make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,* which should have been improved to *work out my own salvation with fear and trembling?* How bitterly would

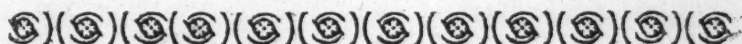
would my own heart have reproached me for my folly, in refusing the offers of grace, which have been so often tendered to me ; and resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit, which have so often sweetly drawn me ; and dividing my heart between God and this world, when it ought to have been the Lord's wholly ? How would the terrors of the Lord have set themselves in array against me, and the dregs of the cup of his indignation have been given me ? *Who can dwell with devouring fire ? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings ?* How dreadful, to be cut off for ever from the divine favour, and for ever to be a companion of devils and damned spirits, to hear their horrid execrations and blasphemies ?—My affections by this time were so moved, that I could not contain, but with an audible voice cried out,—*Lord, gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.*—I was comforted with the testimony of my conscience, that I had not made such my beloved associates upon earth ; that they were not the men of my delight ; and therefore I hoped that my portion would not be with such at last, whose company my soul abhorred. I had an inward witness, that I could never patiently endure to hear the sacred name of God prophaned by impious lips, much less to hear it blasphemed ; but that *God was my exceeding joy, his favour my life, and his loving kindness better than life.* Encouraged by this lively hope, I shifted the melancholy scene to one more bright and glorious.—O ! what a joyful surprize would it be to my soul, as soon as she gets loose from this prison of the flesh, to behold a convoy of angels, which excel in strength, waiting her separation,

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tion,

tion, and ready to receive her into their embraces, and welcome her into the world of glorified spirits? How transporting, to find herself safe under their guardian care, and hear them say?—"Fear not, "happy soul, *thou art greatly beloved.* Oft have we "stooped from the heights of glory, to attend thy "motions, and preserve thee from unseen dangers. "Oft have we been detached from the armies of "heaven, to guide thy doubtful feet through perplexing labyrinths, and to assist and animate thy "devotions. We are now sent to be thy convoy to "realms of light, and to present thee before his "presence, *who hath loved thee with an everlasting "love, and with loving kindness hath drawn thee.*"—Whether borne on the wings of those flaming ministers, or on pinions of her own, with what speed and pleasure would my spirit sail betwixt worlds and worlds towards the haven of immortal bliss? When approaching *the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God,* how divine the joy, to consider *her palaces, and mark well her bulwarks?* What an entrance would she have *through the gates into the city?* How astonished at the grandeur and magnificence, and that a creature, so mean and unworthy, so vile and sinful, should be exalted to such dignity and glory? But O the joy, to hear from the resurgent throne, in mild and gracious accents, such words as these!—*Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*—How ravishing, to receive the caresses of the heavenly inhabitants, who rejoiced at her conversion, and will much more rejoice at her entrance into glory? How peculiarly tender the greetings of former associates in the path

to glory? How charming their songs, and their readiness to teach a stranger? Is all this but the beginning of a felicity, that is to be ever growing?—With these thoughts I felt a joyful persuasion, that this, and much more than this, should ere long be my happy state. I was filled with sweet consolations. I could not forbear crying out, grace! grace! Tears gushed from my eyes abundantly. Whilst I pursued the meditation, I was still with rapture crying out, grace! grace! After these strong emotions subsided, a serious, heavenly frame abode long on my mind, attended with earnest breathings of soul after God and Christ, after grace and glory, such as I never experienced in any former journey.

*Sickness and death improved.*

JUNE 28, 1727. On my return home yesterday from an evening walk, in which my heart had been warmed with meditation; I visited a neighbour, whom I found wrestling with death, and very delirious. I prayed with his friends. This morning I went again, and was much affected, to see so vain a man standing on the very edge of life, soon to leap into an unknown eternity, for which I fear he was too little prepared. He died about noon. In retirement, I set myself to meditate on death, which again prevails amongst us. I then recollected an excellent sermon, preached yesterday, on the importance of having an interest in Christ. My affections were stirred, and gracious discoveries my
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heavenly Father was pleased to make of his love to my soul.

October 1, 1727. In my late *Lancashire* journey, I had sweet experience of the Spirit's gracious influences, helping me to maintain a devout frame of soul, and enjoy delightful communion with God in meditation, when, in many evening walks, I retired from public company. The sickness and mortality, which every where prevailed, was of great service to me, to keep the general temper and frame of my mind serious, by holding the eternal state and world much in view. Blessed be God.



Meditation before the Lord's-supper.

LORD's-day, September 1, 1728. O my soul, I am this day to celebrate the supper of the Lord. It is not a feast for my body, but my soul. Hast thou a spiritual appetite? If, through grace, an habitual disposition towards things of a spiritual nature be given, yet it concerns thee to get lively actings of that divine temper.—I hope a saving change hath been wrought in me. The truth of my conversion hath stood many a trial. My conscience hath witnessed to this good work of the Holy Spirit. *Bless the Lord for this, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*—Yet how indisposed and unprepared do I find myself at this time? God hath been pleased to prove me by many family-afflictions and deaths. I did endeavour, I hope, patiently to submit to the will of God, and to humble myself

myself under his mighty hand. But, alas! how soon hath the sense thereof worn off my mind? How quickly have I lost the impressions of the rod? I have not, indeed, *fainted under the divine rebukes*, but I have *despised the chastening of the Lord*, which should have bound me, as with cords, to the careful, serious discharge of every duty, and to a constant preparation for my own dissolution. — What need have I to be importunate for divine influences from above, without which *I can do nothing*? Let me now awake out of my sloth and stupidity, and stir up my soul to lay hold on God. I am to accept of Christ to be my King and Saviour, with all the blessings of his purchase, as exhibited at his table to all that are willing and prepared. I am to remember him, and what he hath done and suffered, and to shew forth his death, in order to the mortification of my lusts, and the increase of my faith and love, my repentance and new obedience. I find myself sadly unfit for work so heavenly and divine. I have been earnestly seeking the divine presence on my knees. For this cause I will beseech the Lord again and again. *I will go unto God, unto God my exceeding joy*; unto God who hath *the residue of the Spirit*. Who knows but he may return and be gracious? I will confess my sins unto him. Who knows but he may give me *a broken and a contrite heart*? I will plead with him, the death of his own Son, and his own declared willingness to make us holy and happy. God will not shut out the cries of his own children. I will cast myself upon his mercy and truth, who *never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain*. My God will hear my complaint,
and

and give a gracious answer, if I can but send up humble, fervent desires.



Thoughts on the last judgment.

LORD's-day, July 27, 1729. In an excellent Sermon to day, it hath been proved from reason and scripture, *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.* And now, O my soul, what preparation have I made for the future judgment? On what terms do I stand with God? The day is coming, yea it hastens on apace, when I shall be *cut off from the land of the living*, when I shall no longer have opportunity of repenting or believing, of confessing sin or forsaking it, and so making my peace with God through faith in the blood of the Redeemer. I have been long since planted in the house of the Lord. I have made great profession of religion. I have been blest with many serious calls to repentance and new obedience. I have been awakened by many a rod, many a smarting stroke of providence. I have many a time sat down with the followers of Christ at his table, and there profest to renew my baptismal vow, my covenant-engagements to be the Lord's. It may justly be feared, *if I am filthy, I shall be filthy still.* Sure I am, *as the tree falls, there it shall be.* O my soul, art thou savingly interested in Christ, or art thou not? After all the serious, diligent researches of my heart and life I have already made, it is worth my while again to enquire into this important concern, that if, upon an impartial trial,

my heart condemns me not; I may have confidence towards God, and may rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Or if my heart condemns me, yet, as mercy is still freely offered, and there is a possibility of my repentance and return to God, I may labour to get an affecting, soul-humbling sense of my miserable state, and may flee from the wrath to come. Surely there is hope in Christ concerning this thing. If I was presumptive heir to some considerable estate, even though my title to it were very disputable, I should spare no pains in my power to make it clear; I should accomplish a diligent search; I should be contriving ways and means to get as certain a knowledge of it as possible; and as far as I apprehended consistent with justice, I should stick at nothing to make it sure. And doth not the kingdom of heaven deserve as much labour and diligence as an earthly possession? Enquire then, O my soul, into thy qualifications for the heavenly felicity and glory, and consequently thy title to it.—Do I hate sin? Heaven is a state of holiness, as well as happiness, and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie. The God I have to do with, is an holy, sin-hating God, and requires that his people be holy as he is holy. An interest in Christ is utterly inconsistent with a love to sin, for Christ is not the minister of sin. Do I then hate sin? Thus far I am sure, I hate sin in others. I hate profane swearing, sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, uncleanness, theft, and murder. I hate their lying and dissimulation, perfidy and ingratitude. But do I hate my own sins? I hope I can truly say, as to myself, I hate uncleanness of every kind,
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and in every degree. I hate lying, cheating, over-reaching of others, even where I could do it unknown to all men. I hate profaneness of every kind, even profane wit. I hate hypocrisy. I hope, I hate worldly-mindedness. Yea, I hope, I hate pride, even in myself; it is what I watch, and strive, and pray against. I see the beauty of humility. I see the excellency of a spiritual frame of soul, and a holy, heavenly conversation. I hope, I love God so much, that I hate every thing that is derogatory to his honour. I hope, I hate every thing that unfits me for the service of God, or for the duties of my calling. I can generally deny myself things however pleasant and agreeable to my palate, or carnal desires, or views of any kind, so far as I find the gratification and pursuit thereof would interfere with my temporal or spiritual interests, or obstruct my usefulness. I cannot but hope, on the closest examination of my heart, that I do indeed hate sin.—*Do I love God above all, and the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?* Can I answer, if the question were put to me by the searcher of hearts? *Joseph Williams, lovest thou me more than all?* Can I appeal to omniscience itself, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?* I have often found by unquestionable experience, that I do in my judgment approve of the enjoyment of God, of his favour, and the light of his countenance, and prefer it before any pleasure or delight whatsoever, though it be in the absence of every creature-comfort, even in poverty and want, and under a load of scorn and contempt. I do in my judgment approve a life of communion with God in the most
abject,

abject, outward circumstances, better than a series of the highest prosperity, better than the abundance of riches and honour, without his special love and favour. Sure I am, if I can be sure of any thing, that I have often tasted more exquisite pleasure and delight in meditation and prayer, have drawn more solid satisfaction from a sense of divine love, and a good hope of an interest in Christ, than ever I felt in any other joy whatsoever. Yea, in the most prosperous circumstances I have ever been favoured with, my best comforts have been derived from the hopes of the full enjoyment of the divine presence. But then, O my soul, why am I so seldom, and so cold, in meditation and prayer? Can this consist with a superlative love to God and Christ? *Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.* If the favour of God be above all things dear to me, why am I so cold a suitor at the throne of grace? Why am I no more on my knees in my closet? Why do I employ so little time in devout meditation? If indeed I love him above all, why doth it not appear by loving to converse with him? Why do I not love his people more, and delight more in their society and converse? Why do I not shew greater zeal in promoting his cause and interest? O my soul, lovest thou the Lord Christ?—*Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?* Do I believe in him to the saving of my soul? Is mine an evangelical faith? I hope, I can truly say, I approve the method of salvation by faith in Christ. I heartily approve the terms of the new covenant, so far as I understand them. I am heartily willing that God should have all the glory of my redemption by Christ,

Christ, of my conversion, of all my best services, of my highest hopes and comforts. I am willing to lay myself in the dust in a sense of my utter unworthiness. I see and own the unprofitableness and inefficacy of all my best duties, my watchfulness, self-denial, humiliation, and sorrow for sin, of all my obedience and charity, of all my prayers and praises, to merit divine acceptance, and to release me from that obligation to punishment sin hath laid me under, much more to justify me before God, and entitle me to the great and glorious rewards proposed and promised in his gospel. *Counting* all my own righteousness *but dung and dross*, I am willing to reach forth an empty hand, that I may receive a sealed pardon, and be *counted righteous through faith*, and be *accepted in the beloved*. I would give up my wife, my children, liberty, trade, and worldly profits, pleasures, honours, yea even life itself, whenever any or all of them may stand in competition with Christ, or with my duty to him. I would devote myself, my all, entirely to his service and honour, and commit my soul, with all my most valuable and important interests to his care and keeping. To him alone I desire and design to yield up my departing spirit, whenever he shall please to call me hence. But, alas! where are the lively actings of my faith on Christ, and his all-sufficient sacrifice? A spirit of sloth and slumber is fallen upon me. The cares of this world retard the lively motions of my soul. O thou God of the spirits of all flesh, send down quickening influences from above, that I may *stir up* my soul to *lay hold on thee*!



On keeping himself from his iniquity.

LORD's-day, October 22, 1732. Now, O my soul, after hearing an excellent discourse on the Psalmist's declaration, *I have kept myself from mine iniquity*, consider and enquire, what is thy beloved, thy favourite, thy own iniquity. Is it the lust of *uncleanness*? Surely no. I cannot but hope, that, many years ago, when at first I was under awakening convictions, lust then received its deadly wound. Is it *covetousness*, or *love of the world*? I cannot but hope, through the grace and good providence of God, this iniquity is in a good measure subdued. Is it *malice* or *envy*? As to the former, I am not conscious of having ever indulged to it against any person in the world. Neither am I conscious that the latter is allowed or prevalent; though I fear, some risings of it sometimes shew themselves, which, I humbly hope, I utterly disallow, and sincerely strive against. But is it not *pride*? Verily, I have reason to think, this is *the sin that does so easily beset me*. Well then, O my soul, is it not necessary for me to set a diligent watch over this favourite sin? And may it not be useful to consider the several ways by which this sin exerts itself, that, I may the better guard against it. — I think pride discovers itself very much in *angry resentments*; chiefly against my servants, for injuries, slights, neglects, whether real or apprehended. Anger seldom rises in me against my children,

dren, but too often towards my servants. How easily is my spirit ruffled by the awkwardness of servants, and by their doing business either unfaithful or negligently; though, I hope, not so often, nor so easily, nor to such intemperate degrees as formerly? But, O my soul, let me not be partial to myself, nor in the least connive at rash anger. I was helped, last year, by reading *Sibb's Soul's Conflict*. My spirit was so tamed, my haughtiness so reprov'd and brought down, and I gained such a command over my humours and passions, for many weeks, that I was then convinced, it is possible for me to keep this cholerick spirit of mine always under a due regulation and a religious restraint. I may preserve and maintain a calm, quiet, meek spirit amidst whatever provocations; but not without the constant exercise of great watchfulness, solemn meditation, and fervent prayer. And here I record this testimony against myself, if ever unbridled passions should transport me into any indecencies hereafter, that it is for want of a due exercise of one or more of these important duties.—Pride often discovers itself by vain *ostentation*. Alas! how much of this is found in me? Ostentation of learning amongst men of learning, ostentation of piety amongst pious men, ostentation of gifts in prayer, ostentation of being considerable in trade amongst tradesmen, ostentation of acquaintance with gentlemen, are the kinds and ways in which my pride is still too much unconquered. O how weak and foolish is this? In how ridiculous a light doth this set me in the eyes of the judicious? How much more displeasing to an holy God, who requires me to *be clothed with humility?*

humility? O my soul, guard against this vanity! *set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips.*—Doth not pride often discover itself in my thoughts by an *over-valuing opinion and conceit of myself, my attainments and excellencies, my worth and importance?* Had I not some such workings of mind lately, when one elder than myself was called to serve in an office, which I expected? Did I not think myself a better, a fitter man than he? Did I not then entertain fears lest I should not be called next? I endeavoured, indeed, to suppress such workings, and to satisfy myself that such and such were older, and might justly be accounted worthy of precedence. Lord, help me to mortify all sinful ambition, and *in honour to prefer others before myself,* and never to be impatient of seeing others rising above me in any respect.



How pious inclinations become prevalent.

SATURDAY, February 1, 1734. I am considering how far my will governs my affections, passions and practice, and how far it is passive, and how far free! When I call to mind, what was the habitual, prevailing disposition of my mind in my youth; what an impetuous propensity I had to youthful lusts; what a prevailing sway the love of carnal pleasures had over my will and all my powers.—When I farther recollect, by what means the current of my soul was altered, and the bias of my will changed; sometimes by a rousing sermon; sometimes by a season-

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able word of advice or reproof from my father, or other christian friend ; sometimes by an awakening providence ; at another time by a strong impulse on my mind, disposing me in the most serious manner to enquire into the state of my soul, and what preparation I had made for death, and how I could stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, in case I should be called away that day or that night ; which considerations sometimes excited me to redeem time for reading, and to pray earnestly to God for the pardon of my sins, and for a renewed heart. I say, when I call to mind these things, and how a love to God and Christ, and holiness gradually obtained an ascendancy in my soul, I cannot but ascribe that wonderful change wrought upon my will, and the various steps towards it, to the free grace of God, and the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit. But must I therefore conclude, that in every individual act of mine I am merely actuated by some superior, invifible power ? Or, that in every religious act, so far as it is done agreeably to the will of God, I am influenced by the same good Spirit, whose assistance or agency is at other times withheld, or afforded, in a lower measure or degree ? Doth the difference, the great and wide difference, I find in the frame of my heart in religious exercises, at one time and another, proceed merely from the difference of supernatural aid ? Doth it not, in some measure, arise from the difference of my own actual preparation for the duty before hand, or from a difference in my active exertion of my rational powers in the work ? Doth that better preparation itself proceed from some superior agent ? Who shall solve these

these difficulties? Be thou diligent, O my soul, to *work out thy own salvation with fear and trembling*; and so much the rather, because *it is God that worketh in thee, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Thoughts on apparitions.

THURSDAY evening, November 7, 1734. In the twilight this evening I took a solitary walk in the church-yard, there to converse a little with the dead. After seriously reflecting a while on my own mortality, the important change which hath passed on all those tabernacles of clay that lie mouldering there, and which ere long must pass upon mine, as the darkness increased, I felt some approaches of foolish fear, and therefore began to muse on the unreasonableness of fearing the sight of apparitions. — What can I possibly imagine should appear to me? It must either be a good or a bad angel, or else a separate human spirit, or any one of those invested with some visible form. Indeed the visible presence of either of these, but especially the former, might well possess my soul with dread and terror. But suppose a good angel should appear to me; it must be at the command of our common Lord, whom, I humbly hope, I adore and love, though alas! too faintly, too coolly. Such appearance must be under the direction of him, who, I humbly hope, is my reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus. What have I then to fear from such a messenger? It must be on some wise, some kind,

kind and gracious design. I doubt not, I have been favoured with the protection of such a glorious agent, and have had many kind offices done for me by one or more of those ministring spirits, who must therefore be near me oftentimes, though invisible. I doubt not, I have received many a friendly hint from such a gentle monitor, respecting both my heavenly and secular calling. Do I need then to fear, or why should I tremble, at the appearance of so benevolent a being, in whose society I hope to spend eternal ages? Do I not firmly believe, do I not know myself to be a dying creature, that in a little time this frame of nature shall be dissolved, and my spirit take her flight into the world of spirits? And have I not the glorious hope of dwelling for ever in the immediate presence of God, and of being for ever happy in the light of his countenance? Doth not the joyful expectation of having *an innumerable company of angels* for my everlasting associates, afford me a delightful prospect? Why then should the apprehension of such a vision, even in the present state, produce in me any disquieting dread or consternation? — But suppose a fallen angel, yea Satan himself, should appear to me in as frightful a form as my imagination can possibly paint. Do I not believe, and am I not infallibly certain, that he can neither assume such a form, nor make it visible to me, without the divine permission? Hath not the infinitely wise and good God every one of those cursed fiends in his chain? What have I then to fear, even from those avowed enemies of God, of angels and men, since they can do no mischief of any kind, nor hurt any one of God's creatures, far-

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ther than he useth them as the ministers of his vengeance? *Holy angels, who excel in strength*, exult and triumph over all the rage of devils, being superior to all their malice, and invulnerable by all their hellish darts. And may I not rejoice and confide in this, that, if God is my Father and friend in Christ, *greater is he that is in me*, and with me, *than he that is in the world*, the prince of the power of the air, that roaring lion which walketh about, seeking whom he may devour? Where-ever I am, is not God more surely there? O Lord of hosts, *blessed is the man that trusteth in thee*, that sincerely repenteth of every known sin, and by faith and prayer seeks to be justified by Christ's righteousness, and to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. *God, who cannot lie, hath promised eternal life to such*. Do not these considerations quiet and pacify my conscience? And what have I then to fear from Satan?—The appearance of a departed soul, assuming and actuating some visible form, cannot be more dangerous, nor carry in it any thing more terrible, than that of a fallen angel. I have certainly a secret prevailing aversion to the sight of one of these; and I doubt not but such a sight, were I alone, and apprized what it is, would fill me with unusual consternation. Whence doth this proceed? Is it not chiefly from the weakness of my faith? And particularly, is it not from a want of conversing more, in my meditations and serious reflections, with the inhabitants of the invisible world? How necessary is it, in order to a compleat preparation for death, and an entire victory over it, to get those fears conquered, by an over-coming faith in the promises, the power, and the

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the presence of God and Christ? For when I close my eyes in death, shall I not immediately open my immortal eyes in the world of spirits? Shall I not then behold new forms, converse with strange unknown beings, and find myself surrounded with innumerable inhabitants of the etherial regions? How can I hope to keep the possession of myself then, if I am overwhelmed with the dread of such an appearance now? What helps can I expect or hope then, which are not at hand now? Do I hope for the presence of Christ in and after death; and is he not as ready to help and relieve his servants in their distresses now? Do I hope for a convoy of angels to attend and guard my fleeting spirit in its passage up to the realms of glory; and are they not sent forth now, *to minister to the heirs of salvation*? It is true, those heavenly guards are now invisible, who then will be visible to my spiritual sight, and I may then see myself surrounded with powerful friends. But where is now my faith? Is not *faith the evidence of things not seen*? Have I not now a sure word of promise, on which my soul may securely rest? Fortify thyself therefore, O my soul, against all these groundless fears. *Thy place of defence, where ever thou art, shall be stronger than the munition of rocks.* Exercise a lively faith on the infallible promises and immutable oath of God. Rest upon the divine all-sufficiency. Confide in the presence and protection of God, and Christ, and good angels. Keep a conscience void of offence. Be much in converse and communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Suffer no estrangement of thy heart from thy best friend; but *commit the keep-*

ing of thy soul to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator; and of thy body too, nor doubt his protecting care.

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The death of a child.

WEDNESDAY, June 4, 1735. I would now be found enquiring seriously, how I shall improve this severe dispensation of providence, and what considerations may be of use to reconcile my mind to it.—As the creature and property of God, may he not do with my child what he will? —I have no prevailing doubt but that she is *fallen asleep in Jesus*. My gracious and good God enabled me to give and devote her to him in baptism, as well as many times since that, and particularly very often in her last illness. I hope, I have been upright and sincere in dedicating her to God. I hope, I have been truly earnest and fervent in my prayers and supplications to God for her life, if it were agreeable to his blessed will; and that, if infinite wisdom had otherwise determined, she might be ready for her great change. If I have reason to hope that, in my measure, I have been faithful in the discharge of my duty, sure I have no reason to distrust the goodness and faithfulness of God, and his readiness to shew mercy. When our Lord says, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven*, I understand him to mean, both that little children are capable of receiving benefit by Christ, and that the submission, humility, and meekness usually found in little

little children, in opposition to the pride, self-conceit, and self-confidence too generally prevalent in adult persons, is the temper of the gospel, the temper of all its disciples, the temper susceptible of religious impressions, and the temper which the Holy Spirit forms in the heart, to constitute persons proper subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom. May I not from hence derive some hope concerning my dear child's eternal state? How submissive and obliging was her general temper and behaviour? How dutiful to her parents? How ready to comply with the will and inclinations of her sisters? How studious to please? How tender of sinning? What indignation hath she often discovered, when her schoolfellows have uttered profane words? What a measure of the fear of God, and even of trust in him, did she discover, when, at three years old, in a storm of thunder and lightening, she once and again, of her own accord, had recourse to prayer? Can I doubt of the grace of God in her, or that she reaps no advantage from a Redeemer?—*Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil? He hath not written us childless. Thou, Lord, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.*

Hath death, with awful terrors arm'd,
Been waiting at the door?

And ravish'd hence a pleasant babe,
Whose charms delight no more?

How shall we bear the smarting stroke
With a submissive frame?

How well improve the providence,
And profit by the same?

Lord, 'tis thy hand, thy sovereign power

Form'd the dear living bust ;

Thy holy, just, almighty word

Commands her flesh to dust.

Far heavier strokes our sins deserve,

If thou shouldst be severe ;

Patient, submissive, all-resign'd,

Thy just rebuke we'll bear.

What tho' the lovely mortal die,

And perish from our sight ?

By faith we trace the nobler mind

Up to the worlds of light.

See the great judge, with aspect mild,

With pleasure in his face,

Welcome and hail the new-come guest,

While heaven applauds the grace.

See kindred-minds, who went before,

Triumphant flock around,

While to their golden harps they sing

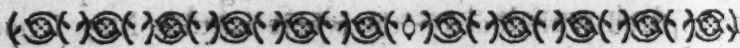
Tunes of immortal sound.

O may we keep th' ethereal road,

Led on by grace divine !

Then shall we quickly go to them,

And in their praises join.



Meditation among the tombs.

SATURDAY, September 27, 1735. After an evening walk in the church-yard, what a fight have I had ? A field set thick with monuments of the

the dead. Yet there are but few monuments, compared with the number of the dead that lie there. Most of those stones were erected since my remembrance, and perhaps not one stone for 20, 30, or 40 that have been buried. What a crowded spot will this be at the resurrection? What a plentiful harvest will it yield? Numerous, though not numberless. Every one of them is known to the Lord the Judge. Every name is registered in his book of remembrance. Not one shall stay behind in the grave. Not one will be missing, whose bones have been deposited here. How numerous will the colony be, which will be gathered from *Kidderminster* church-yard? Suppose this Island of Great Britain not to have been peopled till 500 years after the flood, and that 100 have been buried here every year, one year with another, from that period, it will amount, in the space of 3500 years, to an army of 350,000. If such a parish as this may be supposed to yield so many, what will Great Britain and Ireland produce? If I reckon this parish, either as to its extent, or number of inhabitants, to be about the thousandth part of these three kingdoms, I may compute the three kingdoms to yield, in 3500 years, at least three hundred and fifty millions. And what will the product of these Islands be, during such a period, compared with that of the whole earth? May I not suppose all the dead of the whole earth, within the said 3500 years, to be more than twenty thousand millions? Now, O my soul, stretch thine imagination to the utmost, and consider, how boundless is that mind, how infinite that understanding, which perfectly knows and recollects every individual of

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mankind, with the thoughts, words and actions of each, the time of their birth, the length of their days, all the transactions of their lives, and the time, manner and circumstances of their death. How easily can he separate and collect their scattered atoms? What work will this be for Almighty creating power, to rebuild their ruined tabernacles, and form them spiritual and immortal? What busy work will here be for glorious angels, to collect this vast assembly, and present them before the universal judge? But when I consider holy angels as *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*, perhaps as many as one hundredth part of the whole human race, this thought tends to facilitate my conception of the ease and regularity of such collection. The word of God assures us, that *the dead in Christ shall rise first*. The sleeping dust of saints alone shall hear the first blast of the archangel's trumpet, and awake to joyful life. With what rapture will such awakened saints behold their exalted Redeemer, *who loved them unto the death, and whom having not seen they loved*? How happy the reunion between the myriads of perfect spirits, which *God will bring with him*, and the bodies which they laid down so pale, squalid and ghastly, or were torn from them by torturing racks, or consuming flames, but now refined, adorned, and beautified? How will each glorified spirit admire its own comely form, and say of its divine clothing, O the change from what I once was! But whatever remembrance they will have of their former meanness and misery, and even of their former pollution and guilt, yet all tormenting sense of it will be for ever banished. Will their smiling judge upbraid them with their
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past fickleness and inconstancy, their lukewarmness in his service, and their manifold backslidings, or with their pusillanimity and want of zeal in his cause? Rather, will not infinite charity cover the multitude of their sins? How will they then know more sensibly than ever, that all this glory, with which they are invested, is the product of boundless grace? O how triumphant their joy, to find that all this glory, with all its never-ending progress and increase, was prepared for them from the foundation of the world?



Pious friendship.

[His brother *Pearfall*, under the character of *Damon*, addressed him, under that of *Pythias*, while he was on his Northern journey in February 1736, to whom Mr. *Williams* replied soon after his return. The former was inserted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1736, and the latter in that for the May following.]

Damon to Pythias.

WHILE far from toils your *Damon* sits secur'd,
From rustling storms and rattling hail immur'd;
While easy slumbers bless my downy bed,
And friends and health their softest influence shed;
While glowing fires correct th' inclement sky,
And wife and children with their charms sit by;
Pathetic thoughts my *Pythias* still pursue,
Whom storms attack, and northern winds bedew.

The muse e'en shudders, while she would rehearse
The toils you bear, and rigours fill the verse.
Fain would she follow, with her wings out-spread,
Fond of encircling that important head,
And thinks she still could follow where you lead. }
But ah! such flights her fancied pow'rs exceed;
Affection prompts, but stronger wings she'll need.
Forward she springs to join her absent friend,
Eager through all his trav'ling toils t' attend.
But see, she struggling droops, with languor bends,
Her sanguine hope in disappointment ends.

Yet, while I mourn the dreary wastes you tread, 65
Pause on your storms without a friendly shade;
While full of fears the spreading floods I view,
And sympathizing tears my cheeks bedew;
While exhalations clog the ambient air,
And on their wings unwholesome vapours bear;
While o'er the lonesome rocks and vales you pass,
O'erspread with frosts, and slippery as glais;
With bended knees my ardent vows ascend,
That guardian angels may your steps attend,
In all your dangers lend their friendly arm,
To guide your doubtful way, secure from harm.

When nature sickens, and the god of day,
Is found too weak to drive the fogs away,
May these kind guards their friendly wings o'erspread,
Defend, support, and cheer your drooping head,
Bid storms be calm, let *zephyrs* only rise,
With balmy wings to fan the foggy skies.

In vain the infant spring its beauties sheds,
In vain sits brooding on the flowery beds,
Flora in vain enamels all my ground,
In vain the primrose spreads its fragrance round,

In

In vain the violet, with its beauteous hue,
Peeps out of nature's womb in mantle blue.
—All this is nothing, till I hear of you. }

What though the airy songsters tune their throats,
And court mine ear with their once charming notes?
What though the lambkins, innocent and gay,
Frisk round me, and untaught their gambols play?
Methinks 'tis winter still, while sad I mourn,
My *Pythias* still protracts his wish'd return.

Pythias to Damon

65 - (Sij)
From toilsome travels safe return'd at last,
The boist'rous storms and threat'ning dangers past,
Warm in th' embraces of my dearest spouse,
(Heav'n's gift, propitious to my youthful vows)
And fondly welcom'd, on my safe return,
By my sweet babes, whose transports mutual burn;
To gentle *Damon*, *Pythias* greeting sends,
Charm'd with that love, which to my toils attends.
The muse e'en triumphs, with such friendship blest,
Which lays the storms, and calms my ruffled breast.
Such pious friendship! whence devotion springs,
And, from above, the needful succour brings.
Heav'n heard your vows, and gave me strength to bear
The piercing regions of th' inclement air.

How could my *Damon*, whom *Rosido* loves,
Whose lays the matchless *Philomel* approves,
To rustic *Pythias* humbly condescend,
And generous love, where merit fails, extend?
Blest day! when pleasing bands our hearts ally'd,
Made you a brother, *Phebe* made my bride.

But what are nature's bands, or ties of blood,
What the precarious ties of brotherhood,
To friendship's sacred cement, sweet and strong,
Whose close attraction draws the soul along?
When with my *Damon's* graceful presence blest,
My soul exults, and hails the welcome guest.
Your cordial speech my drooping spirit cheers,
Renews my courage, and dispels my fears,
My thinking powers on nobler themes employs,
Inflames my love, and animates my joys.
So the parch'd earth, refresh'd by gentle show'rs,
Smiles and more glad displays the op'ning flow'rs.
Your absence chills my heart; but while I weep,
Your letters come, and all my sorrows sleep.
What wit, what beauty, truth and goodness shine?
What love pathetic, in each tuneful line?
My muse, with feeble voice, attempts in vain
To sing your friendship with an equal strain.

My doors, to men of virtue, open stand,
My choicest stores, myself, they may command;
But to my friend, I'll open e'en my heart;
To you, the secrets of my soul impart;
I'll tell you all my state, you'll sooth my woes,
Your balmy lips my bleeding wounds shall close,
Solve all my doubts, my thrilling griefs allay,
Improve my joys, and chase sad cares away.
O how I long t' embrace my absent friend!
Fly swift, ye hours, my *Damon* to me send.
Full twenty moons the tiresome distance tell,
Since parting hence, you bid a dear farewell.
But now the wintry storms are over-blown,
The chilling snows, and rigid frosts are gone;

Boon

Boon nature now exerts her genial pow'rs,
The verdant fields are deck'd with fragrant flow'rs,
New prospects in succession court your eye,
Trees in full blossom, and of various dye,
Unnumber'd beauties shall rejoice and smile,
And charming sylvan scenes your steps beguile,
The warbling birds shall chear the lonesome glade,
And ev'ry ev'ning chant a serenade.
Your friends impatient chide your ling'ring stay,
Then haste, my *Damon*, haste, and come away.

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Verses to a friend recovered from illness.

[His friend had been afflicted with exquisite pains, and brought very nigh to the grave. The verses on this occasion were inserted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for *August* 1736.]

BELIEVE me, Sir, 'twas sad, 'twas shocking
news,
The sudden anguish wrung my inmost soul—
“ Your friend *Alexis* dies !”
Through ev'ry vein the thrilling accents roll ;
I'm struck with infinite surprize ;
Whilst sympathizing tears my gushing eyes suffuse.
The dear *Alexis* die ! my joy, my friend !
Kind heav'n avert the fatal stroke,
That precious life restore ;
The rigid sentence mighty grace revoke ;
On bended knees the mercy we implore,
Let mercy from on high the needful succour send.

Indulgent

Indulgent heav'n regards our humble vows.
 Joy to my heart ! thy threat'ning pains surcease,
 The dear *Alexis* lives !

That languid pale which sat upon his brows
 Retires, whilst rosy tinctures now increase,
 And in his sparkling eyes the lamp of life revives.

Ah ! wisely yet revolve this solemn thought,—
 “ Had racking pangs prevail'd, and death ensu'd,
 “ Where had my soul been found ?”
 Life is the time, when pardon must be sought :
 Death and the grave repentance quite exclude ;
 There's no device, nor work, nor wisdom under-
 ground.

Think, when you felt your strength and spirits fail,
 And lay convuls'd in agonizing pain,
 With death in dreaded view ;
 How little then could pomp or wealth avail ?
 Earth's fond delights and sensual joys how vain,
 When th' ever-parting soul must bid them all adieu !

Reflect—what cheer'd you most in that distress ?
 What sins the trembling conscience most appall'd ?
 What were your hopes and fears ?
 How gladly time mispent you wish'd recall'd ?
 What did you seek, what count your happiness ?
 And what resolve, if spar'd to future months or years ?

Come then—what work remains for life to do,
 Whate'er is wanting in your faith or love,
 To crown your hope, your joy ;
 With utmost might and doubled strength pursue :
 Let no delay the steadfast purpose move,
 Nor worldly charms or cares your heav'nly zeal alloy.

Whether

God is what I prize above all things ; that to *walk in the light of his countenance*, is the highest felicity ; I either enjoy, or hope for, in the present state ; and to dwell for ever in his glorious presence is the highest of my future hopes and expectations. Though my conscience blames me for many defects in my obedience and care to please God ; though it reproaches me for many omissions of secret duty, and many sad neglects in the performance of duties of every kind ; all which may justly lead me to call in question the sincerity and predominance of my love to God ; yet it also witnesseth, that in general I am more solicitous to please God than any besides him ; and that I never have such enjoyment of myself, as when I do the things that please him ; nor any joy like that which flows from a sense of his approbation and love. In all my wants, I fly to him for supply. In all my perplexities, I seek to him for counsel. In every distress, he is my refuge and strength. Under all my pains and indispositions of body, my hope, my help is in the great physician ; I look unto him as the first cause, observe his hand in appointing, directing and limiting them, and endeavour humbly to enquire into the meaning and design of it, and *wherefore God contendeth with me*. In like manner would I be found eyeing the hand of God in every loss, whether in trade, or by the death of a child, or other dear relation. When viewed in that light, I may truly say, it hath never been very difficult to me to submit, how severe soever afflictions have been, and whatsoever their nature or kind. I have found my faith in him, a sense of his love, and a prevailing hope that he is my God,

God, a full support under my greatest burthens. I have enjoyed a satisfying assurance, that if I were stripped of every worldly good, I might possess all in him alone. Conscience is my witness, that now, in the fulness of worldly good things, and in the prospect of making some considerable provision for my family, I would be found referring my prosperity to his blessing on my endeavours. Frequently my heart is lifted up in thankfulness to my bountiful benefactor. It is matter of grief to me, when I want the cheering tokens of his gracious presence, and the quickening influences of his good Spirit. But when *his love is shed abroad in my heart*, (and blessed be his name, many such delicious repasts he hath indulged me with) the sense of it eclipses all the beauties and glories of the world in my esteem. I can say with Dr. *Watts*,

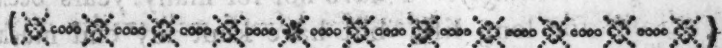
- “ One gracious smile, my God, from thee,
- “ One kind, forgiving word,
- “ Is more than all the world to me,
- “ ’Twill greater joy afford.”

From all which, I cannot but hope, my heart is set most upon God. — What is the main design and business of my life? Any common spectator, who only sees and hears my general conversation, could not see reason to conclude, that I minded any thing so much as the profits and pleasures of this life. I must confess, they have too much of my heart, they occupy too much of my time and thoughts. Yet methinks I would be found living for, and chiefly intending a nobler end than sensual gratifications. I cannot say, that my active obedience and service,
my

my exercise of self-denial, and mortification, on all proper occasions, do so clearly evince, as I could wish, that the glory of God is the main end and design of my life. But though the evidence be too obscure, I cannot but hope nevertheless, that I have no other end, which sways so much with me. It is the grief of my soul, when I reflect on any thing I have done to displease God, or dishonour his holy religion. *My sorrow is stirred*, when I sometimes observe the ignorance and wickedness of others, and more especially if I see the Lord's-day, or hear the Lord's-name profaned. It is a pleasure to me, when I have had an opportunity of *doing good to others, and especially to those of the household of faith*. I think, I have often found, that I should be content to be poor, to be despised, to suffer the loss of all things, yea to be as severely tried as *Job* was, if it were the will of God, and that I might have grace equal to my day, and a revenue of glory might arise to the great author of my being. I find, I can freely part with my money, to feed the poor, or to support the interest of the gospel, and bless God for enabling me *to give willingly*. I have not for many years been solicitous for long life, but have kept my end much in view, and looked upon preparation for death as the great business of life, and though very defective, I hope, I have been sincere therein. Desirous of some competent provision for my family, in case I should be taken away from them, yet I am not conscious of any great solicitude about it, having experienced in myself, my brothers and sisters, that God can and will provide for us, if we are found in the way of duty. But I would be chiefly solici-

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tous to train up my children in the fear of God, *to see Christ formed in them*, and leave a divine blessing entailed upon them. From all which I would humbly hope, that it is the main end and business of my life to please and glorify God. — And now, which would I rather part with, God or the world? In this, I think, I can be more clear and certain. Indeed, how I should stand *the fiery trial*, were I called to it, is hard to say. The thought of it is terrible. But God is all-sufficient; and from the experience I have had of divine consolations, am well-assured he is able to bear up the fainting spirit under the severest torments, to which this flesh of mine can be exposed. As for giving up a good trade, rather than a good conscience, or parting with riches, honours, pleasures, wife, children, and all my dearest earthly enjoyments, I humbly hope, the case is more plain; yea, that *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me*. I desire to ascribe the glory and praise of all attainments to the free grace of God in Christ, acknowledging that *by the grace of God I am what I am*.



Devout retirement from the world.

SATURDAY-evening, July 30, 1737. Retire now, O my soul, from a noisy, busy world, a world of various employments and manifold temptations, to converse a little with thyself. How dear, O my soul, should thy interests be to me, how much more so than the interests of my body? I have done something

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something these two or three last weeks, which, I have reason to believe, will conduce much to my worldly advantage, and how much am I pleased with the [thought? I have heard this week something, which will probably be very prejudicial to my worldly interests, and how many contrivances have I had to prevent the evils apprehended? And is not my soul's prosperity or adversity of greater moment to me? I shall be judged one day by him, *who trieth the reins and hearts, who will render to every man according to his works*, and can I be unconcerned, how I shall pass the solemn test? Am I not conscious of many defects in the government of my passions, in the temper of my heart, and in my behaviour both towards God and men? How shall I stand then, to have my whole life impartially sifted, examined, and laid open? I fly to the blood of atonement, and humbly seek shelter and refuge from devouring wrath in the bosom of my all-sufficient Saviour: I know *he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him*. I know that his compassion is equal to his power, *for he will not break the bruised reed*. Yet I cannot but fear, lest in the day of trial my faith should fail. Sometimes I have had such a lively sense and convincing evidence of his power, goodness and faithfulness, as also of my interest in him, that I have thought I could have sung, with as much cheerfulness as good old Simeon, *Now let thy servant depart in peace*. Soon have I been convinced, that my strength and courage rise or fall in proportion to divine aids; that *it is God who strengthens me with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; and that *without Christ I can do nothing*. Rest thyself, therefore,

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O my soul, at all times, upon his grace, *who is able to keep thee from falling, and to preserve thee blameless unto his heavenly kingdom.*



God terrible to guilty souls.

LORD's-day, July 31, 1737. I have been hearing the terrors of the divine majesty to guilty souls, represented from those words of *Job, Therefore am I troubled at his presence, when I consider, I am afraid of him.* Now, my soul, what is thy temper? I fear this great and terrible majesty.—I fear him for his *greatness*, who is able to cast me, both body and soul, into hell, and might have justly done so long since. I can say, the fear of him doth in some measure swallow up all other fear. Though, I must acknowledge, the fear of man, the fear of shame, and the fear of temporal loss hath often proved a great snare to me; yet, so far as I remember, I can say, and to the glory of God be it spoken, when the sin was obvious, the guilt evident, into which such meaner fear would have betrayed me, then, on the contrary, the fear of God, the fear of displeasing and dishonouring him, hath been found the superior, the predominant principle in my soul. My courage and zeal have been enabled to trample upon all opposition and scorn, in the face of apparent danger, for the cause of God, of virtue and religion.—I hope, I can also say, I fear him for his *goodness*. A sense of gratitude to him is an obligation upon me, I have had such tastes,

tastes, such experience of his goodness and grace, that I fear doing any thing to forfeit his gracious presence, and cause him to withdraw from me. I fear doing any thing to grieve his Holy Spirit, and prevent his chearing and quickening influences. I fear doing any thing to wound or waste my conscience, interrupt my peace with God, or make me shy of his presence. I hope this is the prevailing bent and bias of my soul.—Yet, alas ! I frequently, I daily do things of a contrary tendency. How often do I omit, or slightly, and hastily perform, the duties of the closet, by which chiefly the life and vigour of religion is cherished and maintained ? May I be more diligent for the future to redeem time for secret devotion ! The Spirit of God delights in a calm and quiet, a meek and humble soul ; but how often do I suffer little provocations to ruffle me, and how easily do my keen and angry passions catch fire ? May I better rule my own spirit for the future ! May I be enabled to maintain a constant, habitual sense of the divine presence and observation, to keep me always in a calm, composed frame ! Time is a choice jewel, a valuable talent, every minute of which should be well improved ; but how much of it do I suffer to run to waste, and spend it in unprofitable amusements, which should be spent in converse with God, and in communing with my own heart ? And even in looking diligently into the concerns of trade ? Others may suspect me of too much eagerness in worldly pursuits, while I am conscious of too much slackness. May I henceforward be quickened to greater care and diligence to divide my time aright, and
improve

improve it to all valuable purposes! When tempted any way to neglect present duty, may the same principle, that swayed with good *Nehemiah*, sway with me, *So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord!*—It is for want of consideration, that men are not afraid of God. Did they duly consider God and themselves: Did they consider the awful perfections of God, his irresistible power, his spotless holiness, and his inflexible justice: Did they consider, that sin is highly provoking to him: Did they consider, that he is every where, and takes notice of all their actions: Did they at the same time, consider their own guilt, which exposes them to the displeasure of God, and the terrors of his wrath, which extend to all our enjoyments, and even reach to our souls, and can wound them with insupportable distress, and that all the world cannot support or relieve us under his anger, but that it will pursue us to all eternity: Did they duly consider these things, how would they fear before him? How would *his excellency make them afraid, and his dread fall upon them?*



Growth in grace.

LORD's-day, September 18, 1737. *But grow in grace*, was the subject of this day's discourse. And now, O my soul, what are thy reflections? Certainly I have felt the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit in numberless instances. I think also, I have been made sensible of my corruptions, my sinfulness and misery, and been often humbled

humbled as in the dust. I have been convinced of my need of Christ, and somewhat I have seen of his excellency, and cannot but hope, that I have been made willing to embrace him, and that I have embraced him on his own terms. O that I were made to see more of the worth of Christ, more to admire him, to love him more, and to be more zealous for his interest and glory! I certainly do esteem God as my chief good; my highest expectation of happiness is from him, and from his benignity who is the fountain of goodness, the spring of everlasting consolation. *I have none in heaven but God, nor any thing on earth that I desire or love in comparison of him.* Some tastes I have had of his love, and of those comforts, those *rivers of pleasure which are at his right hand*, the sweetness of which infinitely transcends the choicest delights I ever tasted in mortal things. Surely therefore I have chosen him, yea, I cannot but choose him, for my portion, my everlasting All. I have been entrusted with so much of this world's goods, as to prove what riches, honours, and pleasures of sense can do for me, and have found them all empty, delusive and unsatisfying. On the other hand, that little I have experienced of his love, assures me, that he is an unfathomable ocean of excellency. And though I have not done all that I might, to cherish and cultivate his love, yet surely I prize it above my very life, and dread his displeasure worse than death. Surely I may say with the pious and ingenious Mrs. Rowe,

“ ————— If this is not a truth,

“ I do not breathe, I have not hopes, nor fears,

“ I know

“ I know not where, I know not what I am,

“ But wander in uncertainty and doubt.”

Consequently sin, as sin, is the object of my abhorrence. I loath, and strive against, what was my darling lust, though, alas ! too faintly. Is not this body of sin my heavy burthen ? I can appeal to my inmost conscience, as Mr. *Baxter* doth ; yea, to God himself.

“ Would I long bear my heavy load,

“ And keep my sorrows long ?

“ Would I long sin against my God,

“ And all his mercies wrong ?”

Is not my judgment, my practical judgment, more firmly determined for God ? Speak conscience. Is it not *all my salvation, and all my desire*, to stand high in his favour, be conformed to his likeness, be made partaker of his holiness, and happy in his everlasting embraces ? Are not my affections more disengaged than formerly from riches, pleasures, and the honour that cometh from men ? Though, alas ! I feel too much stirrings of pride, and need more mortification and self-denial. My affections cling to my wife and children, I think, more sensibly and closely, than to any thing else below the skies ; but yet I am convinced, should the great sovereign strike all my comforts dead, one smile of his were a sufficient cordial, even under such an overwhelming trial. As to the duties of religion becoming more easy and pleasant, what shall I say ? Here my assurance staggers. I have cause enough to lament with holy *Job*,
O that it were with me as in months or years past !

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How short, alas ! how seldom, how broken are my secret devotions ? What reason have I to weep over, and be ashamed of, my secret prayers ? Lord, *quicken thou me, and I will call upon thy name !* On the whole, what thanks, what adoration, what love do I owe to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten me again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

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Family afflictions.

SATURDAY, September 24, 1737. The case of my maid-servant [in the small pox] was thought to be desperate, but God hath dealt graciously in her recovery. She is snatched from the very jaws of death. Blessed be her kind deliverer ! May her future life be spent to good purpose ! May I be more faithful in admonishing and instructing her in *the things that belong to her peace !*—One daughter was very ill of the same distemper, but another is like to be much worse. No sooner is one trial past, but another, a sorer trial comes on. *The clouds return after the rain.* Such a burthen, we cannot but fear, will overwhelm her tender frame, quench the lamp of life, and bring her down to the dust of death. What if this should be the mournful issue ? How wilt thou comport, my soul, with such a dispensation ? Wilt thou quarrel with the great disposer, find fault with his dealings, or submit with reluctance ? No, that be far from me. *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds*

of the earth ; but woe be unto him that striveth with his maker. Are we not in his hands, as clay in the hands of the potter, which he may crush or break at his pleasure ? Surely it is meet to be said unto God, *I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.* This very dear child is a treasure committed to my care, a loan lent unto me by the great Lord of all, for which I am accountable to him ; and may he not call in his own when he pleaseth ? Is it not a matter of much duty, much care and labour, much watchfulness and diligence, to bring up a child for God ? And should I grudge, should I complain, if God see good to release me so soon from such an important trust ? O my soul, hast thou been faithful in devoting it by baptism, faithful in praying for it, and in forming it to obedience and virtue, so far as its capacity will admit ? Then take the comfort of it. *Thy work is with the Lord, and thy reward with thy God.* Or hast thou been remiss and negligent ? Then be humbled for past neglects, and diligently improve the hours and days that remain, not only in praying for her life, but in devoting her afresh to God in Christ, begging that she may be interested in all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, and chearfully resigning her to the divine disposal, whether in life, or death.

Saturday, October 1, 1737. This hath been a week of much trial and exercise of my faith and patience. To see a beloved child blinded, and covered over with a loathsome disease, wrestling with death, ourselves helpless and impotent, our bowels yearning over her, but not capable of helping her to one easy respiration. In this distress, to eye sted-

fastly the hand of God, to justify him, to maintain high and honourable thoughts of him, to have all our expectation of relief from him, from his goodness and faithfulness, his power and all-sufficiency, when *flesh and heart faileth*; this is a great trial and exercise of faith. Many a time, this day, hath it been whispered (as it were) in mine ears, *Have faith in God*. Omnipotence can easily sustain her, and spread new life and vigour through every part. But if not, sure I am, he doth all things well and wisely. Though he *take from me the desire* of *mine eyes with a stroke*, still I will trust him, yea love and praise him. I find afflictions good for me. I have ever found them so. They are happy means, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to mortify my corruptions, to subdue my pride, my passion, my inordinate love to the creature. They soften my hard heart, bring me on my knees, exercise and increase faith, love, humility, self-denial. They make me *poor in spirit*, and nothing in my own eyes. Welcome the cross! Welcome deep adversity! Welcome stripping providences! With Mr. Mason,

“ They make me sing, O happy rod

“ That brought me nearer to my God !”

Yesterday morning, and once or twice before, I had sweet enlargement of soul in humble, earnest and importunate supplication, and entire submission and resignation. I can now say, Lord, help me to say it with greater resolution! Come life, come death, welcome the will of God.

Lord's-day, October 9, 1737. It is done. *It is finished*. Her days are numbered, and they are finished.

finished. Do I sorrow as one that hath no hope? Have I not reason to hope she is fallen asleep in Jesus? Have I not a prevailing hope of my own interest in the everlasting covenant? Have I not the testimony of my own conscience, that I have been faithful and sincere in devoting her to God in baptism, and many a time since? Have I not with lively actings of faith laid hold on the covenant for her, and recommended her to the mercy of a compassionate, all-sufficient Saviour? Have I not reason to believe, that she is received into the bosom of her dear Redeemer? The state of separate spirits is indeed far removed from our observation. It is but little that we know of the invisible world. But surely there is reason to hope, from what the word of God reveals, that my dear child is now a glorious, happy *spirit made perfect*, and joined to the *general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*. Why then should I repine, or be dissatisfied, at her removal hence? If all lived to adult age, religious parents might be without trials peculiarly adapted to their patience, their faith, hope and love, their submission and resignation. Many other reasons, no doubt, there are for this conduct of providence. But it may well satisfy me, that, *What I know not now, I shall know hereafter*. For the present, *I am sure the judgment of God is according to truth*, and that he doth all things well and wisely. Then welcome the will of God! *If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. I shall go to them, but they shall not return to me.*

Lord's-day, October 23, 1737. I am sorry to find the humbling sense of this smarting affliction so much

and so quickly worn off. It grieves me, to find my spirit so untamed, my pride so unmortified. I have been transported last week into several indecent fallies of passion, disagreeable to my profession and character, and contrary to many solemn resolves. Certainly pride is at the bottom, unmortified pride. It is true, I was *not angry without cause*. This servant had been negligent, another had spoiled his work, a third had been dishonest; but what then? Might I not have reproved these faults without passion? Is not a mild rebuke more likely to prevent such faults for the future? Or if not, ought I not to have suffered a little loss patiently, rather than ruffle my temper, disquiet my mind, and disturb the peace of my soul? Doth it not argue great weakness, to make another man master of my temper, and subject my tranquillity to every little disappointment? Be ashamed of this, O my soul, and let me learn henceforward better to govern my own spirit. O could I learn to think more meanly of myself, surely I should not treat with a haughty insolence, even my inferiors, though they do things contrary to my interest! What dishonour do I bring upon the gospel of Christ, when I, who have taken upon me the christian name, discover to the world unmortified passions, a spirit so unlike to the meek and lowly Jesus? Is not meekness, mildness and love the very spirit of the gospel? Is it not its distinguishing excellency, to break savage nature, and make it gentle, to civilize brutes and barbarians, to subdue unruly passions, and teach its votaries to *bless them that curse, to bless and curse not*? Hath not our Saviour taught us, *not to resist evil, but whosoever shall smite*

smite me on my right cheek, that I turn to him the other also? Is not this to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect? How then shall it appear, that I am a disciple of Christ, if I suffer my resentment, my angry passions to arise, when no affront, no mischief, no disobedience was designed me, but merely perhaps an act of inadvertency or carelessness? Or how can I expect to be forgiven the thousand talents I owe to my great Lord, if I cannot forgive my servant a hundred pence, or bridle my passion, when the damage done me, perhaps, doth not amount to a single penny?—Again consider, O my soul, when I discover angry resentments for a small neglect or mismanagement of a servant, is this doing to others, as I would that others should do to me? Suppose I was in that servant's place, and had the same dependance on him for a livelihood, as he now hath upon me; (which might have been the case) how would such a behaviour in him towards me sit upon my heart? What pain and uneasiness would it give me? How unreasonable should I think such a keen resentment, such an imperious tone, such an over-bearing insolence, in my master or superior, when the fault was wholly negative, it may be, a mere omission? How tenderly, should I expect, or wish, to be treated, were I in the place of those, whom I treat so rudely? Why then should I give to others a pain, a disturbance, a vexation, which I myself should think altogether unreasonable? Be deeply humbled, O my soul, for past transgressions of this kind, and for the future let me guard against the first risings of passion, or check it as soon as it begins to swell. Pursue and reach after the amiable

ornament of humility, a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. So shall I learn to bear the cross incidents of life without the ruffle and disturbance of my own inward powers, the pain and terror of those about me, and without making others witnesses to my folly and weakness.



Inconveniences on a journey.

LANCASTER, November 1737. From this place, I sent in a letter to my wife the following verses, which I composed for her, while I was riding alone, and in the dark;—

While distant from my dear abode,
And from thy dearer face,
Through lonesome paths and dreary ways,
I roam from place to place.

Frequent the pleasing thoughts return,
And sacred joys inspire—
When fears assail, and danger's nigh,
My Father God is nigher.

Thou art my portion, Lord, I cry,
O let my cry be heard!
Thy favour is the light of life,
Thy providence my guard.

In various musings of the mind,
And thoughts that inward roll,
Thy comforts, which are all divine,
Chear and delight my soul.

I find no certain dwelling place,
But wander here and there;

I'm but a pilgrim here below,
As all my fathers were.

But there remains for me a rest,
An house not made with hands,
A mansion on the heavenly plains,
Where my salvation stands.

Here, I'm expos'd to boisterous winds,
And raging storms invade,
No fence, no shelter o'er my head,
I find no friendly shade.

There is a region all serene,
No cloud infests the sky,
Storms never roar, or gather, round
The saints that dwell on high.

Through shades of night I grope along
Bereft of gladfome day,
Many my dangers, and unseen,
While darkness veils my way.

But there the nations of the just,
Remote from gloomy night,
Are blest with rays of love divine,
And dwell in endless light.

Here we are mourning blasted joys,
Our dearest comforts die ;
Vain are our fondest cries and tears
To hold them, when they fly.

There they, restor'd to our embrace,
With heavenly splendour shine,
And all around our Father's board
Regale on joys divine.

*Endeavours to reclaim a dissolute friend.*

LORD's-day, December 4, 1737. The providence of the Most High, which hath kept me all my days, brought me home last night in safety and health, from my northern circuit, in which I have been out a month. A little before I went from home, I heard a sermon, on *The joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth*. I was glad to see ——— in his place, and attentive to the preacher, while he was very affectionately expostulating with sinners. I immediately determined to write to ———, which I did, as soon as I came home. I begged of him, once a day for a week at least, to retire, and seriously ask himself some questions I gave him, and then pour out the sentiments of his heart in fervent prayer to God. He took my letter so kindly, that he attempted to put the advice in practice; but when he kneeled down to pray, he was seized with horror, and could do little else but weep. He after fell to drinking again, and was out till two or three in the morning. The second or third morning he came home in great agony of mind, accusing and condemning himself freely to his wife, not without some expressions of despair. In this temper he came to me, and in an hour or two's private conversation declared his desire to leave off his sinful course, and suggested his great fear, that he should not be able to overcome the strong habits of vice he had contracted. I endeavoured to comfort,

as

as well as counsel him. On the morrow I set out for the north, and after a week's absence wrote to him many things with the same view. As his case lay much on my mind, I compos'd, in solitary seasons, but chiefly on horseback, and sent him, the following soliloquy.

When I survey my numerous faults,
How black and horrid is the train ?
The number far exceeds my thoughts,
They're tinctur'd with the deepest stain.

Can such a sinner hope to find
A gracious God, a Saviour kind ?

My sins have so offended heaven,
They've been so long my daily food,
I fear they cannot be forgiven,
I fear they cannot be subdu'd.

I can't repent, I cannot pray ;
My head-strong lusts I must obey.

What ! can there no relief be found ?
Am I abandon'd to despair ?
No balm in Gilead's happy ground ?
No Saviour ? No physician, there ?
But must my trembling soul sustain
The terrors of eternal pain ?

Distracting thought ! How shall I bear
The unknown vengeance of a God,
Whose wrath transcends my utmost fear ?
O screen me from his vengeful rod !
With endless burnings who can dwell ?
Or 'bide the raging flames of hell ?

How fast my minutes glide away ?
 Silent, but certain, is their pace.
 Quickly will death conclude my day ;
 Then farewell calls and means of grace !
 Nor judgment lingers, though forgot ;
 My own damnation slumbers not.

1069

See

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See ! The great judge in pomp descends,
 With all his faints, in bright array,
 To doom his foes, to bless his friends.
 O the dread horrors of that day !
 Where shall I hide me ? How retire
 From him, whose eyes are flames of fire ?

Hark the archangel's trumpet's sound ;
 The sleeping clods awake and hear.
 See ! Countless throngs fill all the ground,
 And all before his throne appear.
 With nice survey his piercing eye
 The faint and sinner does descry.

Joyful his faints exult, and hail
 The glorious triumphs of the day ;
 While sinners tremble, weep, and wail,
 O'erwhelm'd with guilt and sore dismay.
 Angelic hosts, at his command,
 Divide them quick to either hand.

Those, he applauds, with glory crowns,
 While pleasure sparkles in his eyes.
 These, he condemns with awful frowns,
 Inexorable to their cries.

O might I then his plaudit gain,
 Refin'd and purg'd from every stain !

And

New year's day. 1738.

85

And shall I still persist in sin ?
I tremble at the guilty thought.
Shall foul corruption reign within,
Since my redemption Christ hath bought ?
The chief of sinners have obtain'd
His grace, and pard'ning mercy gain'd.

Oft have I heard the gospel sound
With tenders of forgiving love.
Of those that seek him, he'll be found ;
For contrite hearts his bowels move.
Who knows, since patience yet takes place,
But this may prove my day of grace ?

Their wants will surely be supply'd,
Whose earnest cries his grace implore.
Nor ever was his suit deny'd,
Who humbly knock'd at mercy's door.
Here, then, I'll wait, and knock, and cry ;
If I must perish ! here I'll die.

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New year's day.

LORD's-day, January 1, 1738. With what
shame, with what thankfulness, have I reason
to reflect on the year that is past ? It hath been a
year of mercy, many and multiplied mercies. It
hath been a year of bodily health, little pain or
sickness have I been exercised with. It hath also
been a year of prosperity : bad as trade is in ge-
neral, God hath been pleased to bless my endea-
vours with good success ; if not equal to some years,
yet

yet I am sure far beyond my deserts. But what returns have I made to God for all his mercies? How backward have I been to devotional duties? How remiss and languid in them? How rarely have I enjoyed sensible communion with God? How little time have I set apart (unless when travelling) from the concerns of the world for solemn meditation, for conversing with God and my own soul? How often have I been transported into indecent sallies of rash and sinful anger; though not so as to strike any person, nor so as to utter prophane, scurrilous, or abusive language; yet so as to suffer my mind to be distempered and over-heated, so as to lose the government of myself, perhaps grieve my wife, children, fellow-christians, and expose myself to their censures. May I double my guard against this my constitution sin. May I be more earnest and frequent in praying for strength and succour from above in the hour of trial and temptation, that *as my day, so my strength may be*. And may I be more constant every morning in devotional exercises, which I have often found so very useful to promote my watchfulness, to compose my spirits, and to mend my frame and temper of mind.

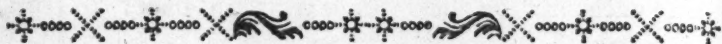


Unhappy temper at the Lord's-table.

LORD's-day, February 5, 1738. This day I have been commemorating the dying love of Christ. But, Oh! how cold hath my love been to him, whose love to me hath been so fervent? How unsuitable

should not be pleased to add any farther increase. Blessed be God, I can take a chearful enjoyment of the comforts of life, and gratify the lawful and innocent demands of nature, without that fear of want, of which *Solomon* says, *This is vanity, and it is an evil disease.* I can pursue my trade and worldly business in an humble dependance on the divine conduct and blessing, without an anxious solicitude for success; and through grace, can bear disappointments and losses with humble submission to divine disposal, without excruciating care and vexation. I cast myself, my family, my most important interests, my all, upon the Lord, with humble trust in his all-sufficiency and goodness, not only as able to sustain me, but who hath promised, *that all things shall work together for my good, and to preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.* Far be it from me to attribute the praise of this to myself. No. *This is the gift of God.* It is not my own wisdom or goodness. *It is the blessing of God that maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.* I would thankfully ascribe to the praise of the glory of his grace, and to the aids of his Holy Spirit, whatever good dispositions I find in me, and would humbly consecrate all to his service. But I would charge on myself the defects of my obedience, and the remains of envy and discontent, which are yet too much unmortified. I have not attained to that full contentment with my estate, which the commandment requires, and which I would be found reaching after. Fain would I be brought to think my present state, however inferior to others in riches and greatness, and whatever losses

losses and disappointments I am at any time exercised with, to be best for me. In order to this, and as much as possible to perfect my contentment, I would—Consider the *folly and mischief of discontent*. It cannot mend my state, but will make it much worse. It is not a likely means of obtaining the blessing of God, but the way to bring his frowns, if not his curse, on what I have. It will unfit me for the duties of religion, and for the proper business of my station in life, so far as it prevails. It will hinder my enjoyment of the comforts I have, and add bitterness to every affliction. It is indeed productive of envy, malice, hatred, injustice, and almost every kind of unrighteousness. — On the other hand, consider, O my soul, the many and great *advantages of contentment*. It is pleasing to God; it honours and glorifies him. It disposes us to a chearful discharge of our duty in all circumstances. It gives us the best enjoyment of life. It will prevent many evils, and preserve from many temptations. It is a cure of covetousness, or an undue esteem of the world, and inordinate desire after it, as also of pride, or too high thoughts of ourselves. It will sweeten every affliction, at least it will take off much of its bitterness, and help us to bear up under losses, reproaches, poverty and disgrace (if we suffer as well-doers) with composure and serenity of mind. O my soul, labour more after this excellent temper, and check and mortify every rising, every motion of discontent.



Youth excited to think of death.

July 11, 1738. [To a nephew, at the age of 12 or 13, Mr. *Williams* wrote the following letter.]

Dear Cousin,

IT was a very mournful providence, which at once bereaved your dear parents of their only daughter, and you of your only sister. I doubt not you, to whom she was so near and dear, could not but share deeply in the common grief of all your uncles, aunts, cousins, and many others that were acquainted with her.—But let me tell you, Cousin, it is not enough to grieve and mourn under so awful a dispensation. Such a providence hath a voice. When death comes into a family, it calls loudly to every surviving member of it, and I cannot but hope you did then *hear the rod*, and did consider *who appointed it*. But perhaps by this time the sound thereof ceases to toll in your ears. Shall I therefore put you in mind? I hope you will not think it impertinent, or unseasonable, at this distance of time, to be reminded of it; for the lessons it dictates, are not to be observed for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year, but throughout your whole life.—It is designed to mind you of your mortality. Not only that you should think of it, while the affecting object lay in your sight, or when you was attending it to its dusty bed, or for that evening when the sorrowful scene was fresh in

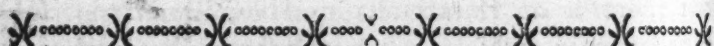
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your memory. Did you not on that melancholy occasion reflect thus? "My sister is dead and gone, who was younger than I. She was lately as likely to live as I now am. A rosy bloom overspread her cheeks, betokening health and vigour, but now, alas! the roses are withered, and turned into a mortal paleness. And who knows but my turn may be next? She that was lately so brisk and sprightly, lies now senseless and inanimate. And how soon may this be my case? Who knows what a day or a week may bring forth?" Did you think so then? And is not the case the same still? And will it not be the same as long as you live? Meditate therefore daily on your mortality. — Not only should it mind you, that you are a dying creature, but should also quicken you to prepare to die. You know that all of you will not die. Man is a compound being. The material substance will die and perish. But there is an immortal, invisible, immaterial substance within, which, when the body dies, takes its flight, as a bird when it escapes out of a cage, and is carried by angels to its proper place. Those that loved God whilst here, and devoted themselves sincerely to his service, and are made meet for the business and blessedness of heaven, shall at death be carried thither. On the other hand, those who had a prevailing aversion to God and holiness, and love to the ways of sin, shall be turned into hell, and be made companions of devils and damned spirits. Now which of these two states would you choose? I know it is not possible you should choose the latter. But remember, they who choose the ways of

of

of sin, do in effect choofe its *wages*. Let this providence therefore excite you to prepare to die, by devoting yourself entirely to God. Do it now. Set out betimes in the ways of God, whereby you will *lay up a good foundation for yourself against the time to come*, and will hereafter *lay hold on eternal life*.

—There is one voice more of this awful froke, which you should never forget; that you are now your parents' only hope. Had your sister lived, then, though you should have proved perverse and disobedient, they might have had comfort in her. But now she is gone, if you should prove a son of sorrow, an heart-breaking to them, where shall they look for comfort? *You will bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*. Cousin, if *thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine*, for I can assure you, that your welfare and well-doing will administer matter of real joy to, dear cousin, your affectionate friend and loving uncle J. W.



[Conjugal love.

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[To the publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Mr. Williams sent the following letter and verses, which were inserted, August 1738.]

Sir,

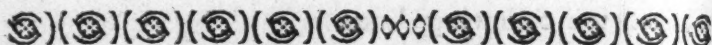
I MEET with many fine things in your *Magazine*, addressed to young ladies, in order to win their affection; but seldom, if ever, have seen any thing done, in the poetical way, to preserve or cherish it after marriage. I hope the poets do not all

all live and die batchelors. Why then should they be less inspired with enjoyment, than with expectation or desire? Or why should it be thought a subject unworthy, or unfit for, the *musés*, to cultivate or celebrate conjugal love? As I was travelling lately in a pleasant evening far from home, the smiling gaiety of the season all around me inspiring delight, my thoughts took an agreeable turn that way, and in an hour or two, on a round trot, produced the following lines.

Mercator to his Amanda.

O thou, in whom complacence dear I find,
 Far sweetest solace of my labouring mind,
 (Saving what sweeter to his grace I owe,
 At whose right hand rivers of pleasure flow)
 Thou dearest partner of my joys and cares,
 Thou daily subject of my fervent prayers,
 Whom should I love but thee, my charming spouse,
 To whom engag'd I stand by solemn vows?
 Are children dear — and not *Amanda* more,
Amanda, who the beauteous offspring bore?
 Whom should I care to please, my fair, but thee,
 Who gav'st in blooming youth thyself to me?
 Nor parents' frowns thy steady heart could move,
 Firm to thy choice, and constant in thy love;
 Love, which through years in pensive patience spent,
 Now'd their reluctant minds to late consent.
 Next be the day! when *Hymen* join'd our hands,
 And bound our gentle hearts with mutual bands;
 The day, when thou, by pure affection led,
 Didst take me for thy spouse, thy guide, thy head.
 Hail!

Hail! wedded love, source of domestic joys;
 Hence! jarring discord, which all blifs destroys.
 Still may my breast with chafest passions burn;
 Still may my dear an equal flame return;
 Connubial flame still in thy bosom glow,
 Fond as the loving hind, and pleasant roe.
 So shall thy blifs my joy perpetual prove,
 And I be ever ravish'd with thy love.



Preparation for death.

WEDNESDAY, August 30, 1738. *I know,*
says Job, that thou wilt bring me to death,
and to the house appointed for all living. Is this a
 serious truth, and should it not then be seriously
 considered? Should it not be admitted daily into
 my serious contemplations, now while life lasts,
 which is so uncertain, and while something may
 be done towards making my death both safe and
 comfortable? Have I any concern in the world of
 equal importance with this, or that so justly de-
 mands some portion of my time to be set apart for
 this solemn purpose and design, even while I am
 hot and eager in my earthly pursuits? If my great
 work be not yet done, what an indispensable neces-
 sity is there, that I set myself seriously to think
 on death, in order to quicken me in my prepara-
 tion for it? What care should I take to mortify
 my corruptions? How earnest and importunate
 should I be at the throne of grace, for renewing
 and sanctifying grace, that the divine image might

be stamped on my soul, that it might be beautified and adorned with every christian grace and virtue, that these may shine forth in my life and conversation, that I may *adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things*, and may be found *meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light*? Or if I have hope, through rich grace, that such a blessed change is begun in me; yet what need have I of the most quickening means, to make me diligent in getting a supply of whatever is lacking in my faith, love, and joyful hope? Do I know yet what it is to die? Or, what further grace and strength I shall want, and to which I have not attained? *It is appointed unto men once to die*. It is but *once* that I am to take my leave of these mortal shores, and launch forth into the boundless ocean of eternity. It is but *once* that I am to resign my departing spirit, with faith, and hope, and humble confidence, to the care of my gracious Redeemer. But *once* I am to close mine eyes on these transitory scenes, and immediately open them, by a new vision, on an amazing, unknown scene, in a region widely different from this, and in the midst of spiritual beings. Notwithstanding I have had for many years, and still have, an habitual prevailing hope, that my everlasting state is made safe and secure, that God is my Father, friend and portion, and that I am his by electing, adopting love, and renewing grace; yet how do I know this hope will abide, and sustain the agonies of a dissolution? How different a view may I then have of my past sins? How much more black and frightful may they then appear, than

than now in a time of health and strength? What different reflections may I then make on my repentance, my sorrow for sin, my faith in Christ, and my several acts of duty and obedience? The sins of my youth, many of which are forgotten, may then revive and affright my trembling conscience, *and the terrors of the Lord may set themselves in array against me.* What can comfort me then, but the testimony of a good conscience, and this sealed and witnessed to by the comforting Spirit? What, but an overcoming faith, in an all-sufficient Saviour, and evidenced by sincere obedience of heart and life to whatsoever he hath commanded? If God speaketh peace, who is he that shall then speak terror? But in this, as well as many other cases, *the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* Many a bright day hath closed with a cloudy evening. Yet ordinarily, where conscience is void of offence towards God and man, death will be attended with present peace and joy. Be it however my chief care and concern, that my death may be *safe*, so that when I die, I may *sleep in Jesus*, leaving it to the great disposer of all events to allot to me what measure of comfort and joy he sees to be most for his glory.

Committing the spirit to Christ.

LORD's-day, September 17, 1738. *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* With these words Stephen the proto-martyr closed his eyes in death, when a
furious,

furious, bigotted mob, had barbarously bruised and battered his body with a shower of stones. Thus the apostle *Peter* directs them that *suffer according to the will of God, to commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.* Thus *David* in great danger and distress cries, *Into thine hand I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* And thus our blessed Lord, just before *he yielded up the ghost*, cried out, *Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.*—The day is coming, the hour is drawing on, even whilst I am writing and meditating on it, it is making its advances, when this body, so dear to me, which I have tended and nourished with so much care, must die. Then all its motions and operations will cease, and it will become wholly untenable to this active immortal spirit, which will then immediately dislodge hence, and being disburthened of the crazy load, will flee away into the world of spirits. Before that, perhaps, pain and grief will render life a burthen, embitter all its comforts, and make the prospect of rest, even in the grave, inviting and delightful. However that may be, the intimate union of soul and body, my unacquaintedness with the inhabitants of the other world, together with some uncertainty about the issues of death, make my soul ready to fear, and (how distant soever that event may be) to tremble at the thought. O! what will it be to sail between world and world? What will it be to quit this earthly tenement, and seek a new, an everlasting abode in the immense, the boundless regions of eternity?

F

“ Hovering

“ Hovering about these mortal shores,
 “ Mine eye with vast survey,
 “ Views the dread, darksome gulph that leads
 “ To realms of heavenly day.

“ This is the vast, untry'd abyfs,
 “ My soul, thou must explore;
 “ O for a kind, a skilful hand
 “ To waft the stranger o'er !”

—I have been present at the death of many of my dear friends. I saw my dear father's dying agonies [1719], I heard his dying groan, while sitting on the bed-side he leaned his head on my breast. Lively emotions of joy, that moment, prevailed and triumphed over all my compassionate grief. I was glad his weary soul was got free from those excruciating pains which were occasioned by a stone in his bladder, and which for many days, yea weeks and months, had lain heavy upon him. It was with a pleasure unfelt before, that my thoughts pursued his departing spirit to a better world and state. I could not but wish *my soul in his soul's stead*, had it been the will of my heavenly Father. But little do I know, or can conceive, what violent struggles of dissolving nature, what anxious fears, what perplexing doubts, might distract and vex his trembling soul in that awful hour. As little do I know, what sudden tides of joy transported his exulting spirit, as soon as the vital bands were burst, and he found himself in the hands of heavenly guards. With what joyful admiration and surprize did he behold that new, that strange, that glorious scene, which then opened

ed to him? How soon were his fears banished, and the dolorous griefs forgot, which he endured in the body? What rapturous joy possessed him, to hear himself accosted by those benign, glorious spirits, as a brother and fellow-servant? What ravishing pleasure to hear his guardian, who had ministered to him upon earth, and been witness to his pious care and watchfulness, his self-denial and mortification, his godly sorrow, his warm devotion, his earnest wrestlings with God, and zeal for God's honour and interest, as well as to his frailties and follies of life; to hear such a one assure him of divine approbation and *acceptance in the Beloved*, and recounting many instances in which he had rescued him from impending dangers, seen or unseen, guarded him from innumerable evils, succoured him in hours of temptation, assisted his devotions, animated his pious resolutions, silenced his fears, resolved his doubts, directed his way, prospered his undertakings, supported him under adversity, and brought good to him out of evil? Perhaps, informing him of the divine care and kindness to his mourning widow and fatherless children? Who can say, what sights he saw, different from what he had seen with the eyes of flesh? Or, what sentiments he conceived, how much more just and true, how much more refined and exalted, than those he had entertained in this imperfect state? How much more knowledge did he gain in one hour, than in the sixty years of his pilgrimage here? How much more justly was he brought to conceive of God, of his essence, nature, perfections, providence, grace and glory? What demonstrative, yea intuitive

knowledge did he quickly attain of those sublime mysteries, which in all ages have puzzled men of the most acute penetration? How was he made clearly to discern the beautiful harmony of those seeming contradictions in various passages of divine revelation, which have employed the tongues and pens of subtle disputants, and occasioned miserable divisions in many christian churches? Doctrines, which now seem incompatible, such as the divine prescience and human free agency, God's free grace and man's free will, the Father begetting and the Son begotten, the Spirit proceeding from both, a Trinity in unity, with many other seeming paradoxes, how are his perplexities concerning them forever done away!

A prospect of the new Jerusalem.

ASCEND, my soul, on *Pisgah* stand,
 From *Nebo*, view the promis'd land;
 Direct thine eye up, far above,
 Beyond, where rolling planets move
 Their circling orbs; yea, further far
 Than the remotest fixed star;
 Glistering with radiant light divine,
 Like jasper-stone, or chrystalline,
 And spangled o'er with many a gem,
 Stands glorious new *Jerusalem*.
 Imperial palace of my God,
 Twelve thousand furlongs long and broad,
 Four-square

(104 Sig. A. 6)

A prospect of the new Jerusalem. 1738. 101

Foursquare the plan, surprizing sight !
Of equal length, and breadth and height.
Pellucid pearls, of various ray,
The city's twelve foundations lay,
Row above row, in order rise,
Of various dye, of various size.
Jasper and sapphire thou shalt view,
With chalcedony's beauteous hue,
Sardonix, emerald, sardius bright,
The beryl, and the chrysolite,
Then topaz, jacinth, chrysophrase,
And amethyst of purple blaze.
On these a wall, built great and high,
Defie, or force, or treachery.
On hinges turn'd, of massive gold,
Twelve gates their pearly leaves unfold,
Each gate one pearl, on each side three,
Arrang'd in perfect symmetry,
In which, by turns, at God's command,
Each at his post, twelve angels stand.
Her streets the purest gold surpass,
More brilliant than transparent glass.
No need of local temple there,
Where God and Christ are ever near.
Their temple, God, the great I AM,
Their temple is the glorious Lamb:
No need of sun, or paler moon,
Where, brighter than the brightest noon,
Jehovah's dazzling glories shine,
And the Lamb scatters rays divine.
There, in his palace, thou shalt dwell,
Quitting this squalid, darksome cell;

F 2

Purer

Purer thyself, and brighter far,
 Than sweet Aurora's social star;
 Nor lucid beams of Sol compare
 With heavenly splendors thou shalt wear.

Wake then, my drowsy, slumb'ring soul!

Who but an owl, or bat, or mole,
 Would linger here in shades of night,
 When call'd to dwell in heav'nly light?
 Ah! look not on the downward way,
 Where thousands in the desert stray.

Mount on the wing, and upward soar,
 Till earthly scenes are seen no more.

Wrapt up in flames of sacred love,
 Triumphant rise to realms above.

Yield not thy heart to mortals here,

O see what beauty triumphs there.

Place not thy all in splendid dust,

The prey of thieves, of chance, of rust,

Delusive treasures! here to-day,

To-morrow wing'd and fled away.

Come, view the rich, exhaustless mines,

To thee, thy bounteous Lord assigns;

So large, so boundless is the store,

My soul can ask, can wish no more.

Do lands and goodly buildings fire

Thine eager wish, thy warm desire?

Look up, and ponder well thy share

In realms above; art thou not heir

To an inheritance in light,

To mansions built by th' Infinite?

On earth, thy fancy often roves

To calm retreats, gardens, or groves.

Oft hast thou felt, what pleasures yield
The bleating flock, the waving field,
The lowing herd.—But what are these,
Compar'd with those life-giving trees,
Whose charming rows, on either side,
Where living waters gently glide,
Branches of healing fruit expand,
Which 'lure the eye, and tempt the hand,
Whose taste excels the richest wine,
Infusing life and joy divine?
There, on the soft, enamell'd floors,
Flora surprizing beauties pours;
The roofs with grapy clusters hung,
(Passing the bower, fam'd *Milton* sung,
In paradise, once sweet, and fair,
The mansion of the favourite pair.)
Heaven's blissful natives entertain,
All scatter'd o'er the verdant plain,
Cherub, and seraph, thrones and powers,
With myriads from this world of ours,
Redeemed souls, by grace renew'd,
Their robes made white in Jesus' blood.
What hallow'd joys their breasts inspire,
While sole, or social, they retire,
For varied bliss, from regal seats,
To these delicious, pure retreats,
Made vocal with melodious lays,
Sung to the bounteous author's praise!

*A good man satisfied from himself.*

LORD's-day, April 8, 1739. Solomon says, *A good man shall be satisfied from himself.* Surely he alone is a good man, who loves God above all, who hath devoted himself, his all, unto God; who studies to know the mind of God, and endeavours to have his temper and conduct conformed thereto; who entirely resigns up himself to the divine disposal in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity, in life and death; who is devout towards God, and benevolent towards men; and all this from a prevailing love to God, and desire in all things to do what is pleasing in his sight; yet, when he hath done all, expects not acceptance with God on the score of his own performances, but through faith in Christ, and for the sake of what the Saviour hath done and suffered for him. This is the good man, who shall be satisfied primarily from God, and in some sense shall be also satisfied from himself. It is, for instance, a satisfying consideration to a good man, — That *he hath made his peace with God.* Some may object to this manner of expression, that not we, but Christ makes our peace with God; for *he is our peace.* It is true, Christ is the great peace-maker, who reconciles God to man, by *bearing our sins in his own body on the tree*, and by *making continual intercession for us.* But we make our peace with God, as we are actors therein, for, through the Spirit, we accept

of Christ with a full consent of wil', and exert all our powers in confessing sin, renouncing and forsaking all sin, bitterly sorrowing for sinful compliances, firmly resolving against all sin for the future, embracing Christ in all his mediatorial offices for redemption and salvation, and earnestly praying to God for pardon, acceptance and eternal life.—It is a farther satisfaction to a good man, that having made his peace with God, *he hath secured his best, his everlasting interest.* It must be his daily and perpetual feast, to enjoy an habitual hope of everlasting felicity, when he hath run his christian race, and finished his probationary course. He will be often looking beyond the vail, and be taking a pleasing, though very imperfect, survey of the glory that is to be revealed. This spreads an habitual chearfulness over his temper, and gives him vastly the advantage over those, who derive all their comforts and hopes from the objects of sense, and confine them to this present state of existence.—Whatever his afflictions or dangers are, *he is always safe under the divine protection and care.* Pain and sickness, losses and disappointments, the death of near and dear friends, poverty and disgrace, they *all work together for his good,* mend the frame of his mind, lead him nearer to God in more frequent and sweet communion, exercise and increase his faith and trust in God, and thankfulness to him. His grateful reflections will be such as these.
“What though pains of body now break my rest,
“and fill me with tossings to and fro unto the dawn-
“ing of the day, they are but temporary; there
“remains a rest for the people of God, and it re-
“mains

" mains for me? Some of those, with whom I
 " have entrusted part of my worldly substance,
 " disappoint my expectation, *riches make themselves*
 " *wings and flee away*; but my best treasure is in
 " heaven, in bags which wax not old, which can
 " never be lost. What though friends die, my
 " God, my Saviour lives, *whom having not seen,*
 " *I love above all*? Friends are that, and that
 " only to me, which God makes them, and when
 " their assistance and usefulness cease, still in an
 " all-sufficient God *I have all things and abound.*
 " Neither poverty, nor disgrace can make me mi-
 " serable, whilst I have the promise, That I shall
 " not want any good thing, That no good thing will
 " be withheld from me, and stand approved of my
 " own conscience, and of my sovereign judge, who
 " will bring forth my judgment as the light, and my
 " righteousness as the noon-day." — It is no small
 satisfaction to a good man, to see the fruits of his
 pious labours. Though many pious parents see cause
 to lament, that *their house is not so with God*, as
 they could wish; yet there are but few, if any,
 who do not see some good fruit of their good ex-
 amples, and pious instructions to children, servants,
 or those about them. *The righteous* not only is, but
 appears in the eye of the world, *more excellent than*
his neighbour. The presence of a good man often
 bridles the tongue of the profane. His sudden ap-
 pearance sometimes restrains a torrent of cursing and
 swearing. When he observes these things, it cannot
 but yield him a secret and sweet delight, and is an
 evident proof, that goodness is so awful, as to bear
 its testimony in the breasts of the wicked. It is a
 pleasure

pleasure to him to curb wickedness, where he cannot cure it. But it is a greater satisfaction to reform the vicious. Accordingly, when he sees his children, under his pious care and culture, not only imbibing religious principles, but their hearts, as clay or wax turned to the seal, early receiving the best impressions, formed to holiness, and manifesting their fear of God, their tenderness of displeasing him, and the inward power of vital religion; his heart is hereby filled with such pleasure, as the men of the world are strangers to, and overflowing with gratitude to the God of grace, he turns his prayers into devout praises. — A good man hath sweet satisfaction and delight in *secret converse with himself and with his God*. Having a conscience void of offence, a heart that does not reproach him; he can spend hours in conversing with himself, with more solid satisfaction, than others can find in the conversation of their most intimate friends. With the greatest complacency he recounts over his mercies, ascribes them all to the unmerited bounty of his heavenly Father, receives them as tokens of his paternal care, and fruits of his covenant love; thus his relish of them is exceedingly heightened, and he at once delightfully enjoys both himself and his God. When walking or riding alone, he views the works of nature with devout contemplation. Every herb, or plant, or tree, or animal, bears evident signatures of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and so adds wings to his faith, fires his love, and draws forth his soul in holy admiration and longing desires after a clearer knowledge and a fuller enjoyment of the great author. He marks and admires that rich and infinite

nite variety with which the earth is crowned, and with what exquisite skill its productions are formed, and adapted to the several ends and designs of the Creator. But in himself, his material and immaterial part, he finds more surprizing wonders.—Thus a good man is satisfied from himself, as the instrument, but God is the author of all his bliss.



Desiring to see Jesus.

LORD's-day, August 5, 1739. O my soul, do I desire to see Jesus? Do I take pleasure in attending those ordinances, where *Christ is evidently set forth*? Where the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace are displayed? Do I often think of him in my retirements, and my heart go out with warm desires after him? Do I attend to his word with this view, that I may know more of Jesus, bear his image more, and be formed to a greater meetness for the vision and enjoyment of him in heaven? Am I going now to his table, that I may see more of his loveliness, discern more clearly my interest in him, and derive richer communications of strength and comfort from him? Is it the language of my heart? O that I may have a humbling, transforming sight of Christ! O that I may have such an interview with him, as to increase my love to him, and inspire me with zeal for his honour! If I thus wait on the Lord, I shall not be ashamed. Their hearts shall rejoice that thus seek him.—Blessed be God, I was this day favoured with a glimpse of Jesus at his

his table. My soul was enlarged with ardent love and longing desires. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.



Mercies and thanks.

LORD's-day, August 26, 1739. Twenty years I have now worn the conjugal yoke, and, blessed be God, it hath been an easy yoke. A thousand family blessings I have received, since the weight of family cares hath rested on my hand. A thousand instances of protection in danger, direction in perplexity, relief under fears, and supply of wants, have there been by providential interposition for me and mine. I have found *the ways of the Lord to be mercy and truth.* His *goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.* He hath not seen fit to give me abundance; but, blessed be his name, he hath given me a sufficiency. He hath not lifted me up above a dependance on his care, nor ever left me destitute of a supply. In straits, a way of enlargement hath always been opened to me, and not seldom by means unthought of, and from a quarter the most unlikely. I have always found, and still find, *it is good for me to trust in the Lord with all my heart, and not lean to my own understanding, but in all my ways to acknowledge him.* My mistakes and difficulties are many, which my folly and rash inadvertency hath plunged me into, *but out of them all the Lord hath delivered me.* That God, who hath delivered, and doth deliver, will still deliver me, if I
trust

trust in him. — I have been exercised with many afflictions in these last 20 years, particularly the death of five children, all dear to me, especially the two last. The rending off such branches, gave my heart sensations the most painful. Blessed be God, who enabled me quickly, and, I hope, entirely to submit, without a murmuring word, or repining thought, because it was his will, because it was his hand. Many losses in trade I have also sustained, but they were quickly made up to my great advantage. Trials of bodily pain I have also had, but these have been light and few, in comparison with my deserts. I expect greater trials than any I have yet encountered. Blessed be God, the prospect of passing *through the valley of the shadow of death* is not now terrible. I know whom I have believed, and have at present a good hope through grace, that he will keep what I have committed to him; yea, that he is my God for ever and ever, and will be my guide even unto death. Though I am weak and impotent, fickle and unstable in myself, though in myself I have nothing to rely upon, to bear up my sinking spirits in that awful hour, or to recommend me to the mercy and approbation of my judge in the decisive day; yet *in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Therefore I will *trust in the Lord for ever*; yea, I will *rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Blessed be God, I have, in innumerable instances, felt his drawing power, and experienced a concurrence of my will and affections. There is nothing, I think, I more ardently desire, than to have all the powers of my soul brought to an entire compliance with his will in all things, that God
may

may be glorified, and *Christ may be magnified in me both in life and in death.* I am, I trust, made willing to be abased, if God may thereby be exalted. I can freely acknowledge myself to be *less than nothing*, and confess that *in my best estate I am altogether vanity.* I am willing to bear the shame of my sinfulness, both original and actual, and give unto God the sole praise of whatsoever good his free grace hath wrought in me, or by me. My best services, as they proceed from me, I see are very imperfect and mixed with sin; but, through the intercession of Christ, they are a *sweet odour, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing unto God.* Though I know nothing by myself, no sin that I either allow or persist in, none but what I have, I trust, sincerely repented of, and turned from, and make it my daily endeavour to *fulfil all righteousness, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God;* yet am I not hereby justified. No, I am justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. I found all my hopes of salvation in the full satisfaction he made to divine justice by his active and passive obedience. As in our nature and stead he *fulfilled all righteousness*, and bore the wrath and vengeance of the Almighty due to us for sin, and hath freely offered the glorious fruits of his purchase to as many as believe on him, so I believe, that through my faith, which is the gift of God, his righteousness shall be, and is, imputed to me, as though I myself had perfectly fulfilled the law in my own person, and that I shall be saved from the wrath to come; yea, that I have now a right to all the privileges of the sons of God, am, through adorable grace *an heir of God, and a joint-heir with*

Jesus

Jesus Christ, and that when Christ, who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory.

This thought transporting pleasure gives,
I know my dear Redeemer lives,
And standing, at the latter day,
On earth, his glories shall display.

And though this goodly, mortal frame
Sink to the dust, from whence it came ;
Though buried in the silent tomb,
Worms shall my skin and flesh consume ;

Yet on that happy, rising morn,
New life this body shall adorn,
These active powers refin'd shall be,
And God my Saviour I shall see.

Though perish'd all my cold remains,
Though all consum'd my heart and reins,
Yet, for myself, my wondering eyes
God shall behold with glad surprize.

But though I have this chearful hope now, whilst death is viewed at a distance, and I am enjoying sound health of body, vivacity of spirit, and prosperity in temporal affairs ; yet who knows how different an effect death, with its attending horrors, shall have on my mind, when it must be viewed in a nearer prospect ? Suppose I should die of a lingering disease, see my flesh wasting daily, be exercised with acute pains, have wearisome days and nights appointed unto me for a long time, and feel myself die by slow degrees. Suppose infinite wisdom should likewise blast the fruit of all my diligent endeavours, and reduce me to poverty and contempt,

so as to have it said of me, "This is he that made
"such a figure in the world!" Add to all this,
suppose my children, or any of them, should take
bad courses, and fall into scandalous sins, or deep
distress, while I was unable to afford them necessary
relief. How would such circumstances increase the
anguish of my mind? How should my feeble spirit
sustain such accumulated burthens? Certainly I have
not in myself power equal to such a pressure. But
is not God all-sufficient? And hath he not promised,
As thy day is, so shall thy strength be? Faith can
overcome, and triumph over the greatest difficulties.
O my soul, be not faithless then, but believing.
Let it be my daily care to approve my heart and
ways unto God, and *have always a conscience void
of offence towards God and towards men.* In the Lord
have I righteousness and strength. I will say of the
Lord, *he is my rock, and my fortress, my God in whom
I will trust, my buckler, the horn of my salvation and
my high tower.* They that trust in the Lord, shall be as
mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.



Counsel and comfort to the afflicted.

Saturday, Oct. 20, 1739. [Mr. Williams being informed that a pious relative was dangerously ill of the *small-pox*, he wrote the following letter to her sister.]

Dear Cousin,

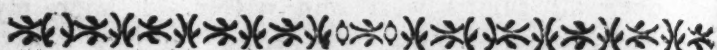
I HAVE been looking up to him, who is able
to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of
disease. Tell your sister that Jesus is as able now to
raise

raise even from the dead, as he was in the days of his flesh, and as truly says to us now, as he did to the father of him who had the dumb and deaf spirit, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* He says to every one of us, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Call upon the name of the Lord in this hour of distress. He can do what neither friends nor physicians can do. *All power is his, both in heaven and in earth.* Life and death are at his disposal. Surely the power he had on earth, is not diminished since his triumphant ascension to the Father's right hand. With what *boldness* may we now enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? Is not this the new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, that we may now bring our wants and burthens, our complaints and distresses to Jesus our friend, yea our brother, persuaded that *in him dwell-eth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily?* O what a privilege to have such a friend, such a brother! If the Lord help us not, what can creatures do for us, how dear, how sympathizing, how skilful soever? I hope your sister, under present trials, can look up to him as her God and Saviour. I hope she can say with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God!* I hope she hath fled, and is now flying for refuge to him, as the hope set before her; and then she may chearfully say, "Come life, come death, nothing can come amiss to me."—I hope you, dear cousin, are continually casting all your burthens on the Lord, who will sustain them. He is faithful, who hath promised. You have, I doubt not, absolutely resigned your sister, yourself, all your important interests to him, who

who does all things well and wisely. I hope my dear and honoured aunt is learning by this providence to trust absolutely in the infallible promise and unchangeable covenant, and under a sense of her manifold imperfections to trust in him, whose righteousness is perfect, and to go to him for pardon, for faith, for submission, for consolation, for every thing she wants, or imagines she wants. — Before we die, it is good to have our passions dead, our affections mortified to every thing below the sun, taken off from the creature, and fixed on the great and good Creator. It is kind therefore in God to give us now and then a more sensible conviction how unsatisfactory and uncertain created comforts are, that we may thereby be led, or even driven, to center in an unchangeable God, the only proper rest of souls. O that every providence, as well as every ordinance, may prove a means of lifting us up to the top of the mount, to behold the glory of him, *who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood!* There may he meet us, and fill us with his love, *cover us with the robe of his perfect righteousness, and make us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* O how happy are the people that are in such a case! What can they lack, what have they to fear, in time, or through all eternity? When once their interest in him is cleared up, they may, and must, *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* May these be the happy circumstances of each of your souls. Be assured, that to commit your present sorrowful case to our compassionate Lord, shall be the daily business of

Your, &c. J. W.

Hea-



Heavenly mindedness.

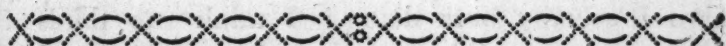
March 14, 1740. [In a letter to the Rev. Mr. Pearfall
he says]

Dear Brother,

I AM thankful for your's. My life is such a constant hurry, that I could not have thought it so long since I received it. But though my time and labours are so much engrossed by the world, sure I am, it is not the effect of my deliberate choice, or prevailing desire. I very frequently leave, with great reluctance, what is more eligible and dear to my soul, to enter upon the concerns of this perishing life, and am dragged into business by the necessity of my circumstances and situation. When I can dismiss all worldly concerns, at the close of the day, and retire from a noisy world, then I most agreeably enjoy myself; then I sometimes enjoy some of my dearest, though absent, friends. O that I could say! —then, I enjoy my God. I hope, sometimes I do. Some glimpses I had of him last winter, which shot such piercing rays, as I know could come from none but him. Indeed, it hath been, as Mr. Flavel often says, Rara hora, brevis mora. O that I could walk with him in a more even, steady, uniform manner! Such influences of his grace, such smiles of his pleased, pleasing countenance, O how have they revived my heart, and what a serenity and sweetness have they diffused through all my soul!

How

How have they eclipsed all created glories, and enabled me to look upon, and use, this world with indifference! Yea, such remarkable interpositions of his providence in my favour, and so many of them, have I experienced, as may well confirm my humble trust, and even confidence in him, whatsoever difficulties he may be pleased to exercise me with. Well do I know, that he careth for me, even for me, and interests himself in my affairs. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.*



The wisdom of numbering our days.

LORD's-day, August 10, 1740. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Alas! how short is human life, when extended to its utmost length? But how very uncertain whether my life will be so protracted? The period of it is indeed certain to him that gave and supports it. The number of my days is written in the book of God's decrees, *he hath appointed its bounds,* which I cannot pass, but hath wisely concealed it from my knowledge. To me it is altogether uncertain, which year, month, or day I must make my exit from the stage of this mortal life. What proportion does this life bear to succeeding eternity? What proportion do mortal joys bear to never-ending misery; or, *these light afflictions, the sufferings of this present time, to the glory that shall be revealed in us, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?*
The

The work of life is great and important, and how little of it is already done? Consider, O my soul, these two things, what have I been doing, and what doth my hand find to do?—What have I been doing? Let conscience now give a faithful account. Much business lies upon my hands in the affairs and concerns of this life. It is my prevailing desire to have my heart, at least, less taken up therewith. Sure I am, studies of a religious nature are more delightful to me than worldly pursuits. I have never more enjoyment of myself than in reading or musing on things of a religious tendency. But still what have I actually been doing? I think two thirds of my waking time have been taken up in worldly pursuits of one kind or other. I can say, I have therein of late been reluctant, and a sense of duty, to be diligent in my calling, hath been a much stronger motive with me, for many years, than the love of gain, or desire of increase. I have spent, perhaps, one tenth part of my time in bodily refreshments, which is not so much, I hope, as hath been laid out in religious exercises, and means for improving my mind. But, alas! how little of my time hath been filled up with secret prayer and devout meditation? How little have I done in combating with my corruptions and lusts? How little in cherishing christian graces and holy dispositions? Yet, I hope, I find and feel my corruptions are grown weaker, and my temptations are more resisted, and easier overcome, than formerly. The Lord Jesus Christ was never more precious to me. My faith in him was never more lively, or more strong. My zeal for his honour was, I hope, never more genuine.

My

My pride was never more mortified. I never was more disposed to strip myself of all honour or merit, that God alone might be exalted. *The world* was never more crucified to me, or I unto the world, and this, I hope, by the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. Never was I more careful to redeem the time, or more concerned at mispending it. But still I am frequently conscious of too much remissness in duties of religion, as well as in my secular calling. *By the grace of God I am what I am.* — Well then, what have I to do? To be more diligent in my worldly business, that I may redeem the more time from it. To be more in reading the scriptures and practical divinity, and in meditation and secret prayer. To be more mindful of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the unsatisfying nature of all created comforts, and to converse more with death and the world of spirits. More to exercise an unshaken trust in God, in his providence and promises, in his care and faithfulness. More to instruct, exhort, watch over, and pray for my children. More to govern my passions, and maintain a calmness, meekness of spirit, and equanimity amidst all the little provocations and disappointments I meet with. Lord, *who is sufficient for these things?* Thy grace is sufficient for me. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.



Meditation among the tombs.

TUESDAY, September 2, 1740. I have been this evening in the church-yard, conversing with those who cannot now converse with me. — There

There I found dear Mr. *Spilbury* * of venerable memory, who *being dead, yet speaketh*. A vigilant pastor was he. Blessed saint ! whose works follow him. — There I found my dear father, with whom I have often taken sweet counsel. A father of precious memory to me. Blessed be God for his instructions, and for his corrections too, even the severest of them. It grieves me to think that I ever grieved him ; but he hath forgiven me. Does he in heaven hear how I am going on ? Ah ! how much does he hear amiss of me ? May I so behave, as to increase his joy ! — There also I found five dear delightful children. How much did I promise myself from them ? And while continued with me, how much did I enjoy in them ? Sweet babes ! you all, I trust, are not only delivered from the burthen of the flesh, and from a world of guilt and grief, but are employed in the high praises of your bountiful Creator, your compassionate Redeemer, and glorious Sanctifier. Though here you knew, and were capable of knowing, but little ; yet now you *see, not as I, through a glass darkly, but face to face*, and are for ever ravished with divine love. How does the glorified spirit of your dear grandfather embrace your kindred spirits, and teach you some of the songs of heaven ? But how little do I know of your business or blessedness ? When shall the day come, that I shall be admitted to partake of your joys ? I will say with Mr. *Baxter*,

“ May

* He was nephew to Dr. *John Hall*, Bishop of *Bristol*, and died Jan. 31, 1727, after spending 34 years as a dissenting minister in *Kidderminster*.

“ May such a sinful worm as I
“ Aspire and ascend so high ?
“ That kingdom's mine, in hope and right,
“ Which you possess in love and fight.
“ That God, that Christ hath loved me,
“ Whose glory your blest eyes do see.”

And with Mr. *Mason*,

“ O happy place ! when shall I be,
“ My God, with thee, to see thy face ?



Meditation before the Lord's-supper.

SATURDAY-night, July 4, 1741. O my soul,
I have in view an opportunity of commemorating
the death of my dear Lord Jesus ; yea, I am invited
to feast upon his body and blood. It is a feast of
his own providing. He is the master of the feast,
and he condescends to sup with his guests, that we
may *sup with him*. He gives us himself, his righ-
teousness and merits, the fruits of his perfect obe-
dience and atoning sacrifice. He gives the pardon
of sin, peace with God, justification, adoption, sanc-
tification, assurance of his love, joy in the Holy
Ghost, a growing conformity to himself, a growing
hatred to sin, a growing love to God and holiness,
mortification of our lusts, crucifixion to the world,
victory over temptations, and over death itself. These
we receive in feeding on him by faith, and resting
upon him. *He sups with us*. We offer up to him our
hearts in love and devout affections, in chearful praise
and self-dedication, grieving for our disobedience and
G ingra-

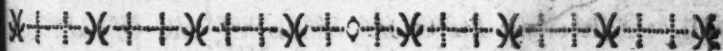
ingratitude to him, and forgetfulness of him, and of his unspeakable love. We rejoice in his love, hope in his mercy, take an holy revenge on his murderers, and renew our resolutions to behave in a manner more worthy our relation and obligations to him.— Communion presupposes union, and union agreement. Am I then united to Christ? Do I love what he loves, and hate what he hates? Are his friends my friends, and his enemies my enemies? *He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.* Have I the Spirit of Christ? Am I *led by his Spirit*? Thus have I communion with Christ? Ah! what reason have I to ask myself in Mr. Mason's mournful accents?

“Where is my faith? Where is my hope?

“Where is my fervent love?”

Alas! it is with me *a day of small things*. Yet I have great encouragement, strong and powerful motives, to stir up these heavenly graces. Many and great favours have I received. What is it, to be freed in some good measure from the bondage of corruption, the power and dominion of sin? And to have a readiness to will that which is good? Shall not *he who hath begun the good work in me, perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ*? What is it, to have *a conscience void of offence*? And should not God alone have the praise of this? He found me running astray, and brought me back to his fold. He implanted in me a fear of displeasing, and a care to please him. Hitherto he hath *kept me by his mighty power*. What is it, to enjoy inward peace and serenity of mind, many comforts in hand, and a joyful hope of infinitely greater in reversion? Surely I have

I have great reason to be thankful, and to praise him for spiritual blessings. And how signal have his mercies been to me in temporal favours? How many and evident to me are the interpositions of his kind and bountiful providence? How distressing might my circumstances now have been? How large was his bounty, and how small my deserts? How many blessings hath God bestowed on me, which I never prayed for? I am grieved for my unthankfulness, but not enough. I might have had the blast of God upon my increase, and why hath not this been the case? O let me never forget to make this an offering of praise, and present it daily to my gracious God. Many have had their substance consumed by devouring flames; let me not forget his preventing goodness and preserving care. What a mercy is it, to have suitable friends, and desirable enjoyment of them? It is God, who makes them what they are to me. A loving wife and dutiful children are the blessings of God. What a mercy to have a sound mind in a sound body? O that my life may be wholly filled up with obedience, love and praise!

*Sanctifying the Lord's-day.*

LORD's-day, November 1, 1741. O my soul, now is a time for serious reflection. Sabbaths return, and point out to me the will of God, that there should be intercourse between heaven and earth. He is calling me off from worldly cares and pursuits, to attend to nobler and more important services. It is his will that I should now rest from toil and labour,

and this in order to my preparation for eternal rest. Heaven is my home, my rest; but how indisposed is my mind to the joys and praises of that blessed state. Amidst a crowd of cares, how are the powers of my soul fettered? How seldom do I look within the vail? And when I do, alas! how imperfect, how transient is the glance? How feeble are the aspirations of my soul towards God, though he is the center of my wishes, and the life of all my joys? Lord, *I have none in heaven or earth* in comparison of thee, and yet how cold is my love to thee? How flat and languid my praises of thee? How fickle and partial is my trust in thee? Sacraments return, and shew thy will, that there should be intimate, endearing transactions betwixt my soul and thy great self. Thou art ready to seal to me the covenant, on thy part, to *be a God to me*, not merely as my Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, but my portion, *my shield and my exceeding great reward*, to pardon all my sins, to subdue my corruptions, to strengthen me against all temptations, by the communications of thy light, and life, and love. Thus thou art ready to make me *thy workmanship*, by changing the bias of my will, imbittering sin to me, enabling me to hate and forsake it, shewing me my absolute need of a Saviour, his suitableness and all-sufficiency, and disposing me to receive and embrace him, and trust in him alone for righteousness, and tuning my heart to love and praise. Lord, thou art ready to do all this for me; yea, thou hast in part already done it. Shall I not be ready chearfully and cordially to seal to thee? Surely, my God, I am under the most endearing ties and obligations to thee. Though I should re-
fuse

use to yield myself to thee ; though I should neglect thy service, and estrange my heart from thee ; yet still the obligation abides, and I shall be found ungrateful and inexcusable. But, O my Lord, both duty and interest call upon me to seal to thy covenant, and make over myself, my all to thee. I am no where so safe as under thy protection, in no circumstances so happy, as in the enjoyment of thy love ; and thou art ever ready, whenever I give myself to thee, to make over thyself to me. These very covenant-transactions, which convey my heart to thee, with all I am and have, give me at the same time a sure claim to thee, as my God, and an interest in thy glorious perfections. And surely there is enough in thee, to fill my soul with peace, and to satisfy every craving desire. What can I wish for, which an interest in God, as my God, does not contain ? Do I desire riches ? No. I hope, I believe, the love of God hath mortified this fordid lust. At least, I hope my will is so swallowed up in thy will, that I desire prosperity and increase of worldly goods, chiefly to increase my public usefulness, and be capacitated to do more for God, for his poor, and the support of his interest. And is not this the likeliest way to obtain my wish ? Do I desire the favour of God, to live a life of communion with him here, and to enjoy his uninterrupted smiles for ever ? I hope I do. I hope there is nothing in the world I prize so highly, or desire so earnestly. And is not this the way to obtain it ? In devoting myself to God, I empty my heart of every thing else. I get an affecting sense of the emptiness and insufficiency of all other comforts, and labour to excite an, hungering, thirsting

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desire after God. I apprehend him to be absolutely necessary to my soul's present repose and future felicity. I earnestly desire him as such, and long after fellowship with him. And is not this the way to be filled? In every strait, I have always found it good to trust in God, and have often said, *God will provide.* He hath provided accordingly. He that careth and provideth for ravens, for young lions, yea for every insect, will he not much more care for men, and most of all for them that trust him, and have devoted themselves wholly to him? Is not this a part of my work, in my covenant-transactions, to strengthen and exercise my faith in his providence, to make a fresh surrender of myself, all I am, and all I have to him, and put in my claim for a share in his providential kindness and care? Is not this the way to have his blessing on what he intrusts me with, be it little or much? Therefore will I seal to my God, to be entirely under the direction of his preceptive will, and entirely submissive and resigned to his disposing will. Whatever is his will, shall be mine, *through Christ strengthening me, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus.* I will trust in the Lord for ever, since I know that, *in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*



Self-examination before the Lord's-supper.

SATURDAY-evening, December 5, 1741. I have been called upon, this evening, to search and try myself, preparatory to the solemn feast I have

have in view, whether I am savingly converted, and brought sincerely into covenant with God ; whether I conscientiously observe God in *his goings in the sanctuary*, and in the world ; and whether I have been owned of God, so that he hath settled upon me, and secured to me, the inestimable blessings of his covenant. It is a vain thing to deceive myself in so important a concern. Speaking peace and safety to my own soul will not secure me from Almighty vengeance. It is therefore the greatest folly in the world to persuade myself, that my state is good and safe, if it be not so. The day is coming, yea it may be at hand, when I shall be tried and examined in another manner by him, *before whose eyes hell and destruction lie naked, how much more then the hearts of the children of men ?* What will it avail me, to draw a vail over my sins ? If I indulge iniquity, *I may be sure my sin will find me out.* Let me therefore set myself as in the presence of God, and sift, and try, and judge my heart and ways.—A long time I have entertained hopes, that my heart is right with God, though in many respects my obedience hath been defective ; but am I not deceived ? Let me examine those defects I am conscious of, and see whether they are *the spots of God's children.* Undoubtedly my master-sin is pride. This hath formerly puffed me up with a too high conceit of myself, and made me think too meanly of others. It hath made me impatient of contradiction. It hath filled me with too keen a resentment of slights and injuries, sometimes with evil surmisings, and hath often broke out in ungoverned passion. But how is it with me now with respect to these things ? What

can I answer to my sovereign judge, if I were now unclothed, and standing at his bar, and interrogated concerning the pride of my heart and life? Can I appeal to him, *Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest* that I hate pride, and that the workings and prevalence thereof are the matter of my grief, and the burden of my soul? Can I say, Lord, thou knowest it is what I have, in the sincerity of my soul, and with tears, often and earnestly begged at thy hands, that thou wouldst *hide pride from me*, that I may be *poor in spirit*, and mean in my own eyes, and this from an humble sense of my original depravity and vileness, the treachery of my heart, together with my manifold backslidings and innumerable offences against thee? Is it not the unfeigned desire of my soul to be vile and base in my own eyes, and do I not reject with abhorrence and detestation the workings of pride, as soon as I discover them? *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

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Heaven is the christian's home.

[In a letter to a distant correspondent, who knew more of books than trade, and therefore wondered at Mr. Williams's not being at home to answer his letters with speed, is the following passage.]

DECEMBER 26, 1741. I thank you for your kind congratulation, and for the serious hint you give me, that *Kidderminster* is not my home. This

This puts me in mind of a verse in the pious Dr.
Watts's Hymns,

“ Let cares like a wild deluge come,
“ And storms of sorrow fall;
“ May I but safely reach my home,
“ My God, my heaven, my All.”

And likewise that of the truly devout *Herbert*, many
of whose old-fashioned odes I greatly admire,

“ We talk of harvests. There are no such things;
“ Until we leave our corn and hay.
“ There is no fruitful year, but that which brings
“ Our last, and lov'd, though dreadful day.
“ What have I here, that I should stay, and groan?
“ The most of me to heaven is fled.
“ My thoughts and joys are all pack'd up and gone,
“ And for their old acquaintance plead.”

I hope indeed I can say, that as *here I have no con-
tinuing city*, or abode, so I am seeking and *looking
for one to come*; that *my treasure is in heaven*, and
that *my heart is there also* (O that it were more!);
and that I value and esteem all my enjoyments here
below, only as means to help me in my way thither.
Adored for ever be that free, rich, distinguishing
grace, which turned and inclined my heart, so per-
verse by nature, to bend my course heaven-ward.

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Communion with God.

WEDNESDAY, February 17, 1742. I would
now record (O that I might do it with a
single eye to his glory, *whose I am*, and to whom I
am

am under millions of obligations!) a fresh instance of the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, coming upon me like a mighty swelling tide, captivating my whole soul, and bearing away my affections full sail from earth and sense up to the celestial throne, and giving me a glimpse of *the glory that is to be revealed*, and a taste of those joys that are unutterable, which spring from *the throne of God and of the Lamb*. I was employed this evening in the twilight in a branch of my trade, and revolving in my mind these lines of Dr. Watts,

“ He will present our souls

“ Unblemish’d and compleat,

“ Before the glory of his face,

“ With joys divinely great.”

When, sudden almost as a flash of lightening, my soul was ravished with a joyful assurance, that my Saviour, my Jesus, will one day present my worthless soul, defiled as it now is, before the presence of his glory, purified from every stain, refined from all its dross, and made meet for the heavenly society and employment, with exceeding joy. My joys were so big, they must have vent. Instantly I retired, and falling on my knees before my God and Saviour, my soul was drawn out in such humble adorations, such glowing thankfulness for all the methods of distinguishing grace, such deep humiliation from a sense of my unworthiness of such high favours, particularly on account of the inaccuracy of my conversation; and, at the same time, felt my heart warmed with such ardent love, and earnest desires after a fuller enjoyment of him, whom my soul loves, as, I think, I scarce

I scarce ever before experienced. I could not but desire, if it were lawful, that my dissolution and departure hence might be hastened, that I might *be with Christ*. I also found and expressed a willingness to stay, as long as God had any work for me to do here, that might be for his glory; yea, to stay his time, to suffer, as well as do, his will. I was led particularly to praise the blessed Jesus, with a melting heart and flowing eyes, for what he had done for me, as living, dying, and interceding, and by the renewing, sanctifying and comforting influences of his Spirit; while a vigorous faith led me to *believe in hope*, and to adore and praise him for what he will do yet farther for me. I then said,

Thou wilt present *my* soul
 Unblemish'd and compleat,
 Before the glory of thy face,
 With joys divinely great.

It was to me a sweet foretaste of the divine joy, which *the spirits of just men made perfect* have on their first admission to the realms of glory. Surely this high elevation is to fortify me against some approaching trial by casting down, and to bear up my soul against some sudden shock of adversity. I had lately such a hint set home upon me, in reading *Dr. Sibbs's Soul's Conflict*. Lord, *thy will, not mine, be done*. Here I am, *do with me as thou pleasest*.

"What sinners value, I resign;
 "Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine:
 "I shall behold thy blissful face;
 "And stand compleat in righteousness."

Or if such an event is not near, I am sure it calls for great humility, great watchfulness and circumspection, that I may adorn my profession, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing, that I may not grieve his Spirit, and forfeit his presence and quickening aids, but by a self denying humility and obedience may be prepared to receive his farther gracious visits.

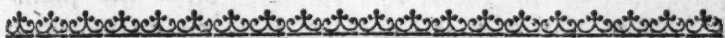
Christ in us the hope of glory.

SATURDAY-night, March 20, 1742. I have been meditating on that expression, *Christ in you the hope of glory*. Surely there is such a thing as a Christ in the true christian, without which all his knowledge concerning Christ will avail nothing to salvation. There is such a thing as an union between Christ and every sincere believer.— There is an union of hearts. *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it. To them that believe he is precious.* Believers evidence their love to Christ, by forsaking all other lovers, devoting and giving up themselves entirely to him, seeking and expecting their supreme happiness in communion with him and enjoyment of his love.— There is also an union of interests. Christ delights in the joy and prosperity of his members. *These things have I said unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* They also delight to advance his glory and the prosperity of his kingdom. They rejoice, when his gospel is received, and

and souls are made willing to comply with the terms of his covenant.——From union proceed reciprocal communications. He communicates to them grace and strength, life and fruitfulness, and they bring forth fruit to and for him. The pious breathings of their souls in prayers and praises, in ardent love and longing desires after him, are his delight. He imparts to them the quickening influences of his Spirit, for which they make a return in vigorous faith and holy obedience. He comforts them with the consolations of his Spirit, the savour of which ascends to him in holy joy, nor less in deep humiliation from a sense of their unworthiness. They profess their weakness and insufficiency, and he gives them strength for duty and succour in temptation. They confess and mourn before him their lusts, corruptions and miscarriages, and he sends peace and pardon. They look to him as the dispenser of their afflictions and crosses, and humbly submit to them, and patiently acquiesce in them, as coming from his hand, and as the demerit of their sins. Notwithstanding the interposition of these clouds, he reveals the constancy of his love, shews them his all sufficiency for their support, and appoints to them a gracious issue and compleat deliverance, even *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. — Thus their hope of future glory is derived from union. As they love and believe in him, they cannot but love and believe his gospel, which *hath brought life and immortality to light* in clearer and brighter discoveries, than ever the church had before been blessed with. They contemplate, with wonder and delight, *the heavenly inheritance*

ritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Their faith is firmly persuaded, that there really remaineth a rest for the people of God. Though it be requisite that they, who are set for the defence of the gospel, should produce other evidences of its divine original; yet, I suppose, any experienced christian, who is passed from death unto life, and is united to Christ by faith and love, hath such an internal evidence of its divine mission, as is far more convincing and satisfactory to his mind, than all other evidences deduced from prophecies and facts compared together.—The believer's union with Christ is farther productive of his hope of glory, as Christ gives him in the gospel the plainest, fullest and richest promises of eternal life. *This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* Christ died to purchase this glory for us, and by his rising again from the dead he gave us a pledge of our resurrection to everlasting happiness. By his Spirit, which dwells in his people, he gives them an earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. He is gone before to prepare mansions for them in his Father's house, and will come again, and receive them unto himself, that where he is, there they may be also.—How great and manifold are the christian's obligations to Christ? How miserable the state of such as are without Christ, having no hope? How happy the state of all that are united to Christ and interested in him? Their hope of glory may well palliate all their cares, moderate their affections to things below, calm their passions, support them under pressing griefs, sweeten religious

religious duties, give them *boldness and access with confidence to the throne of grace*, soften a bed of languishing, and fortify them against the fears of death. It is true, all that are united to Christ, have not a comfortable hope of glory, but they have solid ground for hope. It is for want of more constant exercise of faith in Christ, that their hope is not more lively and joyful. How careful then should we be to cherish and cultivate this blessed hope? How careful should those be, who are diligent in the work of the Lord, and full of good fruits, to *shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end?*



Promoting piety in a daughter.

July 2, 1742. [To one of his daughters Mr. Williams wrote the following letter.]

Dear Child,

MY heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved. Our blessed Saviour hath left it on record, that in his days the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force; that is, persons were awakened by John the Baptist's preaching, and his own, to a serious concern about their salvation, and to see the necessity of repentance in order to salvation. And elsewhere our Lord tells his disciples, that many shall seek to enter in at the straight gate, and shall not be able. From whence it is plain, that salvation is not to be obtained without much labour and diligence.

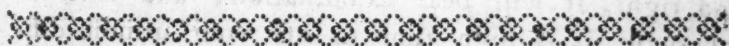
gence.—I have blamed myself many a time for not saying more, and speaking oftener, to you on this head, in order to quicken you now, *in this your day*, to *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*. And I should have been glad to have heard from you oftener. But there is, I know, an unaccountable shyness in young persons to open their minds freely about matters relating to their souls, and their everlasting interest.—I hope you *have chosen the good part*. I see nothing blameable in your conduct, nor would I discourage you, or excite needless fears in your mind. But yet, how it is betwixt God and your soul, is best known to God and yourself. And it is a matter of such vast importance, whether you are really converted, and savingly interested in Christ, or not; that you will, I doubt not, bear with me when I tell you, that I cannot but be desirous of fuller satisfaction about this grand point; and the more so, because I cannot but fear thousands have deceived themselves by resting in a bare profession, and in a name that they live, while they have been *dead in trespasses and sins*. If your case be good and right, it will bear examination; and if it be otherwise, it is high time to use your utmost diligence, in order to make it better. I would therefore not only put you upon a close and careful examination of yourself, as soon as you can get leisure for it, but would likewise gladly assist you therein, as well as I can. For this blessed purpose, I would propose to you two queries, to which, after a careful examination of yourself, I desire you would set down your answers in writing; as I suppose, you can do that with greater ease and freedom

dom than by speaking to me; and let me have your writing in a few days. I would ask you therefore, and put you upon asking yourself,

Have you reason to hope, that you are really converted, and savingly interested in Christ?

What are the grounds of your hope, or what evidences have you, that you are interested in Christ?

The day is coming, when you will be judged by him that searcheth your heart. *If your heart condemn you now, you may reasonably fear God will condemn you, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things.* But if, upon an impartial examination of yourself, *your heart condemn you not, then have you confidence towards God.* If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; that is, we shall not be condemned. Therefore be at pains about this great concern, chiefly for your own advantage, and in a subordinate degree for the satisfaction of your affectionate parent, J. W.



Narrow escape from death.

SATURDAY-night, September 11. 1742. I have lately had my hope tried, and it hath been found *an anchor of my soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.* This day fortnight, by the fall of a frame of timber, my life was in jeopardy, so that I could not tell, after my understanding and senses returned

ed to me, whether my skull was fractured or not. Words cannot fully exprefs what a noble, what a divine cordial it was to my throbbing heart, in that awful hour, when my life hung in fufpenfe, that I had a prevailing hope, yea a fatisfying joyful affurance, that death could not hurt me, that its fting was taken away, and my everlafting intereft fecured. O how fweet and dear was an all-fufficient Saviour then to my foul! I had not indeed impatient longings of foul to be gone, nor fuch ravifhing fense of his love, as might make me *defirous to depart, and to be with him*, though I know it is far better. The fight of my wife and children, for whose comfort and welfare I felt then a more anxious care, than for my own, and in whose countenances I plainly beheld all the marks of moft tender concern for me, together with fome other confiderations, made me, I think, more than willing, if it were the will of God, to abide longer in the flefh. But I had fuch a firm faith in God's all-fufficiency to provide for them, and difpofe of them in the beft manner, that I had no anxiety of any kind, and fo far as I remember, had a pleafing enjoyment of myfelf in an entire refignation to the divine will. My deliverance was great, and calls for great thankfulnefs. A wife, a righteous, a watchful, and gracious providence was difplayed both in wounding and healing me. If *a fparrow falls not to the ground without our heavenly Father*, much lefs does a rational being. If *Job*, plundered by *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans*, could fay, *The Lord hath taken away*; certainly his hand was not lefs evident, when a frame of timber,

which

which no mortal had touched an hour before, should fall on me, as soon as I came under it. Possibly I might have escaped, had I apprehended the danger near; but though I heard a crash, and an immediate outcry, I was utterly fearless, imagining the danger to be on the remote side, because the workmen were there. Spectators expected, that, if my skull was not fractured, at least some of my limbs were broke. But, blessed be my kind preserver, no pernicious effects ensued. How compleat was the mercy? I might have been a burthen to my family, a spectacle of pity and horror, dragging out an useless life in pain and misery. *He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. He keepeth all thy bones, not one of them is broken. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*



Meditation before the Lord's supper.

SATURDAY-night, August 6, 1743. Consider, O my soul, wherefore did the Lord of glory leave it, as his dying charge, that by *eating bread and drinking wine we should shew forth his death until he come to judgment?* Why must christians, in their religious assemblies, frequently repeat this service? Doubtless it is instituted for our good. It is no small thing, to *believe unto salvation. Faith is the gift of God, a supernatural work, yet is not wrought without outward means.* The Spirit useth means to begin faith, and

and also to cherish it, and carry it-on *from faith to faith*, from lower to higher degrees. It is a great thing, to trust for righteousness to justify me, for strength to fortify me against temptations, for succour under all adversity, and for eternal life, as *a reward of grace not of debt*. It is a great thing, to trust for all this in one that died, *who being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death*. Surely I have need to be well-satisfied, that he is able to do all this for me, *able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him*, and that he is as willing as able. According to the record of infallible truth, *He is the true God, and eternal life. He is over all, God blessed for ever. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. He it is, who declared, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*. Faith may with security rest on such a promise from such a one, though there were not another in all the book of God. But our all-wise Lord knew our weakness, our fickleness and forgetfulness of him; he knew how ineffectual our solemn vows would be, to keep us close to him, and how useful sensible signs would be, to renew the exercise of our faith in him. If the yearly keeping of the *passover* was not sufficient to prevent *Israel's* running into idolatry, though in that solemnity was a lively representation of their miraculous deliverance from *Egyptian* bondage, how much less would a bare narration have done it? So our blessed Lord knew, that the bare preaching of his gospel, and declaring what he had done and suffered for our redemption from sin and wrath, would not have been sufficient.

sufficient, from age to age, to cherish faith in him, and therefore appointed bread to be broken, in remembrance of his body broken for us, and to be distributed among believers, and eaten by them, in token of his body being offered to them, with all his benefits, and received by them as the bread of life, by which their souls must be fed and nourished unto eternal life. In like manner, he appointed wine to be poured out, to represent his blood shed on the cross for them, and to be distributed among them, that every one should drink of it, in token of their trusting in him, to wash away their sins by his blood. — Now, O my soul, with what temper of mind should I approach this gospel-feast? I must, under these symbols, receive Christ Jesus the Lord. In taking the bread, this Lamb of God, with all the blessings of his purchase, is freely offered to me. As this bread was broken, so I believe the body of Christ, in his agony, scourging, and crucifixion, was broken, wounded, bruised, and chastened for my iniquities. My soul rests on the fulness of that atonement he hath made to the justice of God for my sins, the remission of which I now receive by faith in him. I also receive all needful grace, in proportion to the various occasions of the christian life. Do I lack wisdom, meekness, courage, humility? These and every other blessing and grace, hath Christ purchased for me, and freely offers to me. My faith reaches out an empty hand to *receive of his fulness, and grace for grace.* What can I want, who have *Christ in me, the hope of glory?* — In like manner, when I receive the wine, my heart applies

applies that precious blood, which taketh away all sin, which hath a cleansing virtue, and is the price of my redemption from *the wrath to come*. Hereby shall I be fortified and strengthened for every combat with **F**lesh and blood, with angels, principalities and powers. This precious blood was shed for me. Blessed Jesus, I build all my hopes of salvation on the merits of thy blood. *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me to God by thy blood*. Thou, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thy blood, art worthy of my most ardent love, and most exalted praises. To thee I humbly devote and consecrate myself, with all I am, and with all I have. To this fountain will I daily have recourse by faith, for mercy to pardon, and for grace to help me in every time of need.



The omniscience of God.

LORD's-day, June 17, 1744. How amazing is the omniscience of God! What is all our knowledge, what the knowledge of an archangel, if compared with his? Great omniscient majesty! Thou knewest, from all eternity, whatsoever hath been, is, or shall be wrought in time. Thou knewest and carest for every kingdom, community, family and person upon earth. From everlasting thou knewest me, when I should be born, of what parents, in what circumstances, how I should be educated, and what part I should act on this stage of clay. Lord thou knewest me, whilst I knew not myself.

myself. Thy all-comprehending mind takes in, at one view, the several ranks and innumerable families of creatures in their perpetual and endless successions. Not a reptile or insect, not a mite or animalculum escapes thy cognizance, much less an immortal soul. The whole system of providence is before thee. Thou knewest, from everlasting, that I should direct my thoughts to thee at this time, and whether I should do it in sincerity or hypocrisy. Thou knowest how I shall employ myself this day, and what I shall do the next. Thou knowest how I have disposed of one child in marriage, and whether I shall do so by the rest, and to whom, and what joy or sorrow I shall have in them. Thou knowest what quantity of riches I have acquired by thy blessing, what more shall be added, and how I shall bestow it both in life and at death. Thou knowest what farther trials will be set before me, by temptations to luxury, vanity, dishonesty, or unchastity; and how I shall acquit myself therein. Or, what trials of opposition, contradiction, censure, reproach and contempt I shall be farther called to conflict with, for the sake of Christ and of a good conscience. Or, what trials of crosses and losses in trade, or by the perverse temper and behaviour of relations and friends, or by their afflictions and death, and how I shall sustain them. Or, what pains of body I must farther endure, and what measure of patience and resignation I shall exercise under them. Thou knowest the day of my death, the manner and circumstances of it, which are all hid from me, whether at home or abroad, whether by a sudden stroke of thy

thy hand, or by lingering illness, or gradual decays of nature; whether I shall have bitter conflicts with the enemy of souls, and the last enemy death, or whether I shall have an easy and compleat victory over both; whether my sun shall set under a cloud, or whether I shall have hope in death and an entrance ministered unto me abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thou knowest what my passage shall be into the invisible world, which to me is covered with impenetrable darkness; what shall be my state and employment there, whether I shall have my portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, or in the regions of immortal light, life and love; whether devils shall triumph over me, insult me, jeer and scoff at me, and drag me; as the executioners of thy justice, from one engine of misery and torment to another, or whether holy angels, those ministering spirits whom thou dost send forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, shall be my blessed and joyful convoy, through the immense fields of æther, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the paradise of God, and which of the blessed spirits shall be the first to hail me welcome thither.

(***)

Self-examination.

LORD'S-day, August 12, 1744. The Minister hath been preaching, in a lively and pungent manner, from those words, *Examine yourselves, whe-*

ther ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? He closed his discourse with a pressing exhortation, to examine and prove ourselves, and to do it now. It is implied, he says, that if christians do examine themselves, their rule of trial will be, whether *Jesus Christ be in them*. And be this my rule of trial at this time. Adored be *his grace*, who hath *revealed his Son in me*. I am not afraid to be searched, though I know it will be an awful test. I must stand before the Lord of glory, whose *eyes are as a flame of fire*, who *searcheth the reins and hearts*, who hath seen all the sinfulness of my heart, and hath been witness to all my open transgressions and secret abominations. I tremble at the thought of standing before his tribunal, and being sifted by him, who is privy to all the intents of my heart. Yet, in the main, I fear not the trial, nor the important consequences of it. *My heart shall not be afraid*, because I know, and he knoweth, that *Jesus Christ is in me*. *Christ dwells in my heart by faith*. I look to him, and trust in him and in him alone, for salvation. Fain would I *walk in all his ordinances and commandments blameless*, not allowing myself in the wilful commission of any known sin, or omission of any known duty, or indeed in the careless and negligent performance of it. Yet am I not hereby justified, nor do I seek, promise, or propose to myself justification hereby, knowing that *by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*. My trust for acceptance with God is only in the merits of Christ, his perfect obedience, his atoning sacrifice. This is the *white rai-*

ment he counsels me to buy of him, and blessed be his name, it is a garment he hath long since given me without money and without price. I have come to him weary and heavy laden, and he hath given me rest. O how sweet is that rest, that holy security and peace I have in believing! And as Christ dwells in my heart by faith, so also by love. Though my love to him be too cool and remiss, and the exercise of it is too frequently and too long intermitted; yet my Lord, who knoweth all things, does know, that there is no other object in the world, after which my love is at any time drawn out in such an intense degree as himself. Dear Jesus, thou knowest this, for thou didst kindle the first sacred flame, and thy Spirit fans the holy fire. Thou knowest, how dead and mortified my affections are to this world, and the world to me, for thy sake. A glimpse of thy glory and thy beauty hath tarnished and eclipsed all mortal glories. A taste of thy love, and of the joy that springs from the light of thy countenance, some cordial drops from that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, have rendered the sweetest delights on earth tasteless and insipid. Thou knowest, O blessed Jesus, how dear to my soul the remembrance of thee is, and this not only on sacramental occasions, but in my daily meditations. Can I doubt then, whether Jesus Christ is in me, when through adorable grace, I find his love to prevail and swallow up all other love? Never did I so fully understand, or so sensibly feel, till of late, what it is to have Christ dwell in my heart by faith, and have my fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Yet I am sensible,

able, it is but little I know of these things, in comparison with what may be known, and which indeed many others have experienced, and are experiencing at this time. But thus much I know, that it is the happiest life in the world, to *live a life of faith on the Son of God, and to have Christ in us, the hope of glory.* What do I owe to the riches of divine grace, which hath led me into this blessed knowledge? *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!*



Happy temper at the Lord's-table.

LORD's-day, August 26, 1744. The whole administration of the Lord's-supper to-day was, through adorable grace, a sweet opportunity, a most delightful gospel-feast. How did my heart burn within me? How tenderly did it throb? What streams of tears, even tears of joy, joy unspeakable and full of glory, flowed from my gushing eyes, while the minister was in his introductory discourse? From those words, *As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come,* it was considered, To whom we should shew the Lord's death? Even to God the Father, who had so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.—To Jesus Christ, the Lord and master of the feast, who was present with his guests, ready to bid us welcome, and to spread over us the banner of his love.—To

the Holy Spirit, who had formed our hearts anew, and would by his quickening, comforting influences *seal us to the day of redemption.*—To the holy angels, who were present, rejoicing in the grace vouchsafed to us, and in our sincere and affectionate devotions.—To devils, who would envy, rage and pine at our glorious privileges, while we, *in the strength of the Lord of hosts, the captain of our salvation,* might bid defiance to all the powers of darkness.—To our fellow-men, both saints and sinners; to animate the *former*, to strengthen and confirm their hands; to testify to the *latter*, where our hopes are founded for redemption and everlasting life, and mark out to them the way to blessedness.—Lastly to ourselves, for invigorating our graces, strengthening our resolutions, to be the Lord's, and that we may receive of his fulness all needful supplies. With what humble boldness did I appeal to the omniscient God, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that each of the divine persons knew the sincerity and integrity of my heart, amidst all the imperfections and frailties with which I am encompassed? With what holy freedom and confidence could I desire of God to search and try me, my own heart not condemning me? How did my heart glow with thankfulness and admiration, at the amazing condescension and love of God in Christ Jesus to a creature so mean, so vile and sinful? Had the tide of sacred joy swelled a few degrees higher, I could hardly have restrained myself from crying out in the congregation, O he is come! He is come! Such a sacramental season, I am sure, I never was favoured with before. Not
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Prayer relating to the Choice of a Minister. 1745. 149

unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to thy name be all the praise. O may I now more than ever adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour! May I maintain high reverential thoughts of God, and more lowly thoughts of myself! May I cherish a thankful frame, walk humbly and closely with my God and Saviour in all things! Amen. Hallelujah!



Prayer relating to the choice of a minister.

SATURDAY, March 9, 1745. Our gracious God hath wonderfully appeared for us, I humbly trust, in answer to our earnest prayers. Our late worthy minister, the Rev. Mr. *Bradshaw*, died November 10, 1742. Soon after his death, a few pious friends agreed with me, to unite our prayers twice a week, that God would provide for us a pastor after his own heart. This we did by ourselves in a private room, over and above the many publick meetings for prayer on the same account. Ever since we begun this course in private, the sensible experience of the divine presence we have had with us, hath kept up our hope, that *the great shepherd and bishop of souls* would interpose in our favour, and bring our religious contentions to a happy issue, and our deliverance hath been brought about by a remarkable train of providences. Never did I hear such pleadings, appeals, expostulations. Never did I feel such inward wrestlings. Tears I found in abundance. I hope we could all in some degree say, *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.* Surely that

God, who poured out upon us such a spirit of grace and supplication, hath heard in heaven his dwelling place, and granted us the desire of our souls. Well, said holy *Asaph*, and no doubt from sensible experience, *It is good for me to draw nigh to God.* A mighty conflict he had had with himself, in which he had been sorely tempted to envy the irreligious, and to entertain ^{hard} thoughts of a good God and of his dispensations. But by conversing with God in exercises of devotion, he was enabled to overcome the temptation, and confirmed in his choice of God as his portion, and ^{of} religion as his way and walk. God had given him a clearer discerning, than he had before, of the fearful end of a vain, wicked life, however attended with ease and wealth, prosperity and pleasure, and howsoever it might be closed with an entire freedom from those anxieties about a future state, which sully and becloud the period of many a life devoted to God and religion. And how good hath it been for me to draw nigh to God! O how sweet, how refreshing, how comforting and confirming have these seasons been, ever since we began our private meetings for social prayer! We first engaged therein, not without great fear and trembling for the ark of God. But such rich experiences, such sensible tokens of the presence of God with us, were we favoured with, both then and ever since, as marvellously animated our faith in God, *caused light to arise out of darkness*, even when the clouds gathered the thickest blackness, and still *in hope to believe against hope.* How remarkably, how seasonably did God appear for us! He hath far outdone our warmest hopes, our fondest expectations.

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It plainly appears, that those circumstances, of which we were ready to say, as good old *Jacob* did, *All these things are against me*, have eventually contributed much towards bringing about the desired end.

Lord's-day, March 17, 1745. The minister of our unanimous choice declared his cordial acceptance of our invitation from the pulpit, to a crowded audience to-day, and at the close of the publick worship, our congregation sung the following hymn.

To thy great name, O prince of peace !
Our grateful song we raise ;
Accept, thou sun of righteousness,
The tribute of our praise.

In widow'd state, these walls no more
Their mourning weeds shall wear ;
Thy messenger shall peace restore,
And every breach repair.

Thy providence our souls admire,
With joy its windings trace,
And shout, in one united choir,
The triumphs of thy grace !

Our happy union, Lord, maintain,
Here let thy presence dwell ;
And thousands, loos'd from Satan's chain,
Raise from the brink of hell.

Distressed churches pity, Lord,
Their dismal breaches close,
Their sons unite in sweet accord,
And troubled minds compose.

In all be purity maintain'd,
Peace like a river flow,
And pious zeal, and love unfeign'd
In every bosom ~~flow~~ *glow*

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Christ delivered for our offences.

LORD'S-day, November 3, 1745. The minister hath been discoursing on those words of the apostle, *Who was delivered for our offences.* Strange doctrine ! Should I not think it so, had I not been blessed with the revelation of the gospel ? That glorious *mystery, which was hid from ages*, and is still hid from most of the nations, is revealed unto me, and blessed be God, not only in the letter, but in the spirit of it. Blessed be God, who hath given me an appropriating faith to say, Jesus was delivered to death for my offences. He died, as my surety, as a criminal, as a sinner in the eye of the law, though not before God, and though *he knew no sin, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him*, agreeable to the tenor of the new, the everlasting covenant, in which he is become *the Lord my righteousness* ; at the same time that I am a sinner in the sight of God, and *the chief*, or among the chief, in my own account. In the discourse, how did my heart throb ? How did every bowel within me roll ? How did I long after the conversion of sinners, that those who are yet *aliens and strangers*, might be made *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*, and particularly for those of my own household ?

hold? Sorry I was, at the close of the duty, to see so many dry eyes, when my own had been so drenched, and so many faces wearing an air of unconcern, while my heart burned within me. And how sweet was my commemoration of the death and sufferings of Christ at his table? How constraining was the power of his love? I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Certainly such a sacramental season I have not been favoured with since the memorable August 26, 1744. Certainly it was good for me to be there. My soul was borne as on eagles wings. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name.

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Comfort laid up for future trials.

February 17, 1746. [To a married daughter, Mr. Williams on a journey wrote the following letter.]

My dear child,

IT hath long been matter of my warmest desire and most earnest prayer, that all mine may be the Lord's. And now, I have no greater joy, than to see my children walking in the truth. I have long entertained hopes of you and your sisters, that I have not in vain prayed and laboured, and, as it were, travailed in birth again, until Christ be formed in you. O that parents and children may be all ripening apace for God and glory!—As for you, my dear, [who are in a married state, let me remind

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you to be expecting *trouble in the flesh*. The more you expect it, the better you will be prepared for it, and the more easily will it be borne, and prove the more advantageous to your best interests. You have been made to *bear the yoke in your youth*, by afflictions in your own person, which *for the present were not joyous, but grievous*. Expect a return of these. They will not come the sooner. Your children have been *chastened sore*, though *not given over unto death*. Expect to see them *taken away with a stroke*. Realize to yourself such a trial. Your husband, to whom God hath given sound health, may leave you a widow, and your children fatherless. [Her husband died seven years after.] Father and mother may be gone too, or may be utterly incapable of comforting you.—I suggest not these things to distress you, or to abate your present comforts. No, my desire and aim is, that you may have growing comfort, and that, in every stage and state of life. Therefore take up your portion in God. Fetch all your joys from your covenant-relation to God through Jesus Christ. God is a fountain that never fails, even when creature cisterns are dried up. Look upon your children as lent, rather than given. Consider who is the proprietor. And may he not *do what he will with his own*? Be willing then, since his glory is concerned in it, that he shall *do with you*, with your husband, with your children, *what seemeth him good*. The more you depend on him for comfort, and draw your comforts from him, the more you will find, that outward changes cannot deprive you of your joy. *David* could fetch comfort from the covenant, when one of his sons had been guilty of incest,

incest, another of murder and rebellion, and a third of treason. *Habakkuk* could rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation, when creature-comforts were intirely cut off. God is the same now as then. *The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary.* We are never duly prepared for trials, till we are willing to let go those enjoyments, which God may call for, whether health, substance, children, husband, &c. Nor can we willingly quit this mortal life, till we are assured of immortality; nor part with present enjoyments, till we are assured of better in reversion. There is enough in a covenant God, enough in the love of Christ, to raise us superior to every changing scene of life, to keep us humble and heavenly-minded in prosperity, and to make us patient and chearful in adversity. Jesus is a precious name. To be able to call him, *My Jesus, My Lord, and my God, My all in all*, is more than to have all the treasures of the *Indies*. It is more than to have an army for our guard, or a legion of angels for our convoy. It is more than to have all the birds of musick serenade us at our window every morning, and a band of musicians, in most enchanting consort, to attend us all the day. Why may not all this treasure, strength, honour, pleasure be your's? Jesus is a sea of love. As the sea spreads its arms, to receive all, that from every coast shall venture to launch forth, and finds room enough, and to spare, for every one; so does the blessed Jesus with open arms receive and embrace every soul, that with humble confidence rests upon his promise and all-sufficiency. To his blessing I commend you and all yours. May the grace of *the Lord Jesus Christ*

be with your spirit. May the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, and the love of him that hung on the cross, be ever towards you. So prays your truly affectionate parent, J. W.

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Promoting piety in a son in law.

Dear _____

February 17, 1746.

AS you stand in the relation of a son, and are become bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, who is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, I find and feel my heart and affection drawn out towards you, and tenderly concerned for your interests, especially for your spiritual prosperity. For this my soul hath been poured out in earnest intercessions many a time, more particularly of late, both before I begun this journey and since. I have seen reason to hope, that you attend with seriousness to the most important truths; and would hope, that you have experienced what it is to be a *new creature*, to be *born again*, to have *old things past away*, and *all things become new*. Nevertheless, as this is a most important point, the very hinge on which your salvation turns, since without it a man cannot see the *kingdom of God*, allow me to ask what evidences you have, that this change hath indeed passed upon you? As there are but two states which divide the world of mankind in eternity, reason tells us that there must be a wide difference in the characters of one and the other here in time. Those, who are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, will never be thrust out of it; as, on the other hand,

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the unmeet for heavenly society and employment will never be admitted. The chief meetness for heaven is love to God and Christ. We do not love God at all, if we love him not more than all. *If any man, says Christ, cometh to me, and hateth not father, mother, wife, children, house, lands, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* The meaning is, that we prize an interest in Christ above all the world, and are willing to let all go, rather than by sin lose the Saviour. It is a great thing to love God and Christ in this high degree. The ways of holiness are irksome and tedious to corrupt nature ; and though the unconverted may shew some regard to God and his ways, yet this is the language of their hearts, *Behold, what a weariness is it ?* — It may be difficult to determine, whether you love God and Christ above all, which was my own case for many years, yet you may certainly know, whether any remarkable change hath ever passed on your temper of mind ; whether at some particular seasons you have been filled with concern for your soul, and with distressing fears lest you should perish for ever ; whether you have sometimes had such a sight of the emptiness of all creature enjoyments, that you would have given all the world to obtain the favour of God and an interest in Christ ; and whether you have been made to prize the gospel, as the means for securing your eternal salvation. You may know, whether you have been convinced of the sinfulness of your heart and life, so as to *abhor yourself, and repent in dust and ashes* ; whether you have also seen your absolute need of a Saviour, the all-sufficiency of Christ, the freeness of his love and grace, and his

his readiness to receive and embrace every returning sinner; and whether, as a sinner, you have been enabled to trust the promises of the gospel. You may know, whether you have been grieved for your former, as well as later sins, and particularly for your ingratitude to Christ, and have been determined for new and better obedience. — I am not ignorant of the modesty of your temper. If you cannot talk with me, you may write to me. Be not discouraged. *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?* — Believe this freedom to proceed from the abundant love and tender concern for your everlasting happiness, of your affectionate father, J. W.

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The doubting christian comforted.

April 15, 1746. [To a young gentleman, who was under serious concern about his eternal state, Mr. Williams on a journey wrote the following letter.]

Dear —

I THANK you for your freedom in laying before me the thoughts of your heart. Certainly I should rejoice to hear that the Lord had spoken peace to your soul, and assured you of your interest in his everlasting love. Yet I must tell you, I am not sorry, nay I rejoice, to hear you are *lamenting* after him. No doubt you want to be an established christian at once, and to *walk in the light of God's countenance*. It is a laudable ambition. But perhaps infinite wisdom sees you are not yet fit for such a state. So the Apostle Paul would fain have been

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rid of his *thorn in the flesh*; but then, probably, he would not have been so humble, nor have prayed so much, or so earnestly. Therefore the Lord said to him, *My grace is sufficient for thee*; that is, Thou shalt not be overcome by the temptation; but it is good for thee to be farther exercised therewith. So in your case, the power and grace of Christ, it is plain, is not withheld from you. Else, why these lamentations after the Lord? It is an evidence you thirst for grace. Why do you mourn over the hardness of your heart? Surely there is some degree of tenderness. Do not think your prayers denied, only for want of *peace and joy in believing*, or that you cannot *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. The Apostle did not think his prayers denied, while sufficient grace was afforded. Let the Lord work his own work in his own way. Rejoice that he hath *not taken his Holy Spirit from you*. The longer you are held in this soul-humbling state, the stronger may your comforts be in due time, the clearer your evidences, and your thankfulness raised to a higher pitch.

These threat'ning trials, fears, and dangers past,
Your soul, with full salvation crown'd at last,
More clearly may its countless value know,
And to the Saviour endless praises owe.

Go on asking, seeking, knocking, and depend upon it, for they are Christ's own words, *Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened*. You may assure yourself of an interest in the daily prayers of,
dear ———, your, &c.

J. W.

Self.

*Self-examination before the Lord's supper.*

FRIDAY-night, September 5, 1746. The minister hath given us a preparation sermon on those words, *Lord, is it I?* May I learn, from the example of the disciples of my Lord, to be cautious and fearful of judging others, to be jealous over myself, and in all my self-judging to appeal to Christ, as the discerner of my heart, and the judge of my integrity. O my soul, how sad will my state be hereafter, how shocking and dreadful my disappointment, after all the profession I have made, and the glorious hopes I have entertained, should I at last be found an hypocrite? I doubt not, I am esteemed a sincere convert, a true believer, by numbers of my fellow-christians. I am sensible my wife, my children, my most intimate friends esteem me such. So probably did his fellow-disciples esteem Judas. It should seem, that every one of the *eleven* was more ready to suspect himself than the real traitor. They did not ask, *Lord, is it this man?* but on the contrary, *Lord, is it I?* It was Christ alone, the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, who could discern the hypocrite. What will the good opinion of fellow-christians avail me, in the great decisive day, if Christ the sovereign judge should condemn me? What confusion must cover me in that awful hour, if he, who is the faithful and true witness, does not testify for me? If I only wear religion as a mask, to cover carnal views and sinister ends,

ends, the time is certainly coming, when the mask will fall off, and then, what is my hope? *Shall not my hope be cut off, and my trust be a spider's web?* How terrible would it be, after I have eaten and drank in his presence so often, to hear him profess, he never knew me? How could I bear to hear him say, *depart?* — But for ever blessed be the God and Father of my Lord Jesus, who hath begotten me again, and through whose adorable grace, I am born again, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, and raised unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. O the glorious hope, to which my God and Father hath begotten me again! This is the life of my life, the health of my health, the riches of my riches. What would all this world, my near and dear relations, health and prosperity be to me without this? They are all loseable, perishing things, and I must die and leave them all behind me; but this I shall never lose. Or should my hope, as to the lively exercise of it, be clouded and intermitted for a season, yet the thing hoped for shall never be lost. It is an inheritance, to which the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ have a just right and claim. It is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. It is reserved in heaven for me, and I am kept by the power of God through faith unto that salvation. Of this I have satisfying evidences, not so much taken from what I have done for God, as what God hath done for me. He hath given unto me, to hate sin, to love holiness, and to love God above all. He hath given me repentance for all and every sin. He hath given me to see myself poor and blind, guilty

guilty and undone without a Saviour, to see Christ as suitable and all-sufficient, and humble faith in him as my righteousness, even Jesus as my all. He hath given me to see myself *compleat in Christ*, worthy through his worthiness, righteous through his righteousness, and *strong only in the power of his might*. Adored be his victorious, distinguishing grace. Hallelujah.



Objections to receiving the Lord's-supper.

January 21, 1747. [To the same person, as April 15, 1746, and who was now in the prospect of marriage, and made that an objection to his coming to the Lord's-table, Mr. Williams wrote the following letter.]

Dear ———

YOUR objections against your coming to the Lord's-table are, the general vanity of your mind contrary to all your desires and resolutions, and the more particular distracting situation you are now in. But if you must not partake of the Lord's-supper, till you can do it without distraction, is not this an *offending against the generation of God's children*? According to this, I have been an unworthy communicant 36 years. Besides, is not God as really displeased with our distractions in prayer, as at the Lord's-table? Would it not be an high affront to King George, if, while you were petitioning him for your life, or any great favour, you should stop every

every now and then, and turn away from him, to listen to the buzzing of a fly, or to stare at the company? And is it less displeasing to the Majesty of Heaven, first to be solemnly invocated to *bow the heavens, and come down*, to listen to your humble cry; and presently see you turn your back upon him, and break off the thread of your address to him, and attend to every trifle that comes into your mind? But will you therefore leave off prayer? I know you abhor the thought. No, you are sorry that it is so; you are grieved, that you cannot *attend upon the Lord without distraction*; and you gladly fly to the blood of atonement for mercy to pardon your unallowed infirmities. Yet, let me tell you, you may as justly *restrain prayer before God*, as neglect to commemorate the dying love of a dear Redeemer, because you cannot do it clear of distractions. — You seem indeed aware of such a consequence, and in order to obviate it, you intimate, that you never expect to be in such a situation as to be free from wandering thoughts. But you also seem to intimate, that there is something in the wandering thoughts occasioned by a love-affair more peculiarly disfitting for the Lord's-supper, than in those which spring from other sources. But I can assure you, from my own experience, that it is no such thing. Were your's a criminal amour, had you any dishonourable intention in prosecuting it, your reasoning on that head would hold. But as the consummation of it, which you are seeking and longing after, is an ordinance of God, and instituted in paradise, and as the object of your wishes appears every way worthy of them, there is no more reason for your being ashamed of it,

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or conscious of any guilt on that score, than for your being ashamed of any other lawful business. Yet most young people, I believe, are haunted with a kind of conscious shame in such prosecutions, and it seems to be wrought into our very nature. *Milton* represents *Eve* in her state of innocence as not entirely free from it.

“ She heard me thus, and, though divinely brought,
 “ Her innocence, and virgin modesty,
 “ Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
 “ Which would be woo’d, and not unsought be won.—
 “ Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir’d;
 “ The more desirable. Or, to say all,
 “ Nature itself, though pure of sinful thought,
 “ Wrought in her so, that seeing me she turn’d.”

Now lay all these things together, and then tell me, why an honourable love-affair should any more, or any more perniciously, distract the mind, and distract it for the nearest approaches to God, than our five days work. Nay, I can assure you, from my own experience, that worldly cares, the cares of a family, which are common to all men, have sometimes been more distracting to my mind in converse with God, than courtship, though mine was attended with much greater difficulty than your’s.—I rejoice, that you can say, you can appeal to him, *who knows all things*; that you ardently desire to love him, and can look back on the time, when all sin became odious to you, even your greatest burthen. What though you have not that full assurance of your interest in Christ, which you desire? No more had I, till fourteen years after I was a communicant. The means of attaining

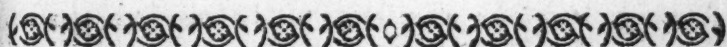
it, is to wait on the Lord in his own way, and expect it in his time. The more you feel the love of Christ, the less you will doubt your love to him. The way to feel more of his love, is to wait on him there, where his love is most sensibly displayed, where by sensible signs he is freely offered, nay given to you, even Christ with all his benefits. Fix your resolution now, never to be altered, that you will take the first opportunity of publickly *giving yourself to the Lord, and unto his people by the will of God.* Your prosperity for both worlds will much augment the joy of your assured friend and servant for Jesus sake, J. W.

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Christ with them that meet in his name.

SATURDAY night, February 28, 1747. Our Lord says, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Surely there is more implied, *in my name,* than I have hitherto conceived. Many will meet to-morrow in places of worship, but will they all meet *in the name of Christ?* Will they all enjoy his presence?—Scripture is its own best expositor. *Jerusalem is called the city which the Lord did choose, to put his name there;* that is, where he would be worshipped. *Elijah said to Baal's prophets, Call ye on the name of your Gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord.* The Psalmist says, *The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.* He also says, *In the name of our God we will set up our banners.* The prophet

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prophet Micah observes, *All people will walk every one in the name of his God; and concludes, We will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* Here are implied worship, obedience and trust. So *Baptizing in the name of the Father, and [of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* When our Lord says, *I am come in my Father's name. The works that I do in my Father's name.* When Peter said, *In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.* There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Signs and wonders done by the name of Jesus. Paul spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Such passages must imply, that they who are gathered together in the name of Christ,—Believe that Christ regards their worship.—They believe that Christ is able to give the mercies they pray for.—They not only believe him able, but willing also, to grant their requests. *For all the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him Amen.*—It implies, that they are gathered together in the love of Christ. They cultivate, cherish and exercise love to him, and desire to be like him in every attainable degree.—It also implies, that they put on Christ. The Apostle says, *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* And he exhorts, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* If we put on Christ, we do by faith apply him to our souls with all his merits. It implies, not only that we have done so in some former instances, but that we do it in the present act of worship. If a servant is sent to ask or buy something in his master's name, the person he treats with, does not so much consider the character of the servant, as that

of his master, and being satisfied he is such an one's servant, gives or sells according to the regard he hath for the master; for he considers the servant as vested with the master's character. So here, If I ask in Christ's name, I must put on Christ. I must believe his righteousness mine, his obedience mine, and the virtue of his sufferings and atoning sacrifice to be mine. For me he was born, was circumcised, fulfilled all righteousness, was made sin; that is, he stood in the place of me a sinner, for me he suffered and died, for me he bore the wrath of God, and made full satisfaction to the justice of God. It does not hence follow, that I am Christ, or that I in Christ, did and suffered these things. But it will follow, that I share in the atonement he made for sin by his meritorious sufferings and sacrifice, and am interested in all the blessings of his purchase.



Confirming piety in a daughter.

On a journey, May 2, 1747.

My dear child,

I HAVE no greater joy, except rejoicing in Christ Jesus, than to see my children walking in the truth. I hope you have all chose that good part which shall not be taken away from you, and I sensibly find such a glorious hope hath contributed not a little, for many months, towards keeping me in high spirits. To see the partner of all my joys and cares, and all my children, travelling with me

Sion.

Sion-wards, and to look forward to the day, when we shall all sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of our Father; O it is the life of my life! It puts life into my prayers. It fills me with gratitude, when approaching the divine footstool. It is abundant by many thanksgivings unto God. It cheers many of my lonesome hours. It assures me, that you will never want such a measure of earthly good, as is best and most conducive to your immortal interest, for all other things shall be added unto you. And it tends perfectly to obliterate envy from my breast, for I think no man upon earth happier than myself.—My dear child, it is indeed desirable to find our souls always upon the wing God-ward and heaven-ward, ready to every good work, our faith always lively and strong, taking heaven by force, and in our wrestlings with God saying, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. It is highly desirable to have love to a dear Redeemer always flaming, and our affections to all created comforts duly regulated, so as to love him better, love opportunities of conversing with him, and prize his presence and the tokens of his love, even above our necessary food. It is very desirable to find, that indwelling sin, the corruption of our nature, the workings of unbelief, our deadness in duty and backwardness to it, are our daily burthen, under which we groan, being burthened. It is good to renew daily and deeply our repentings for actual sin, and find a growing hatred to it, and watchfulness against it, and a holy jealousy over ourselves following us into all places, companies, and employments. As a consequence of these things, it is desirable

able to have a joyful hope, that we are indeed passed from death unto life; that God is our God for ever and ever, and will never leave us, nor forsake us; that the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit to our being the children of God; that we find heaven already begun in our souls, even the dawning of an eternal day; and that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and the sun of righteousness arisen there with healing in his wings. These are true riches, solid pleasures, and substantial honours.—In ourselves we are nothing, and of ourselves can do nothing. Christ is the fountain of life and grace, and the more we go to him, and to God in his name, the more abundantly shall we receive. Christ stands with blessings in his hands ready to bestow upon all that come; and the more, and the oftner, we come to him, the more shall we have; for he giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He does not tell us, as we are too apt to tell our fellow-mortals, “You was at my door yesterday, or very lately, and I relieved you; how can you have the face to come again so soon?” No, *his ways are not our ways*. He bids us, *pray without ceasing*. And if we prayed without ceasing, we should receive without ceasing. *Why are the king’s children so lean from day to day?* Is it not because they have too little, and too seldom, recourse to the fountain? They who frequent the court learn a genteel and courtly behaviour. Have not we a heavenly temper? If not, it is because *our conversation is not in heaven*. We never shall be lively christians, till we live much with Christ. *Nehemiah could pray to the God of heaven*, while he was waiting on an earthly

earthly prince. And could not we pray more than we do, while walking, sitting, working, nursing, or conversing with fellow-mortals? Mr. Herbert, speaking of such ejaculations, tells the Lord,

“Thou canst no more not hear,

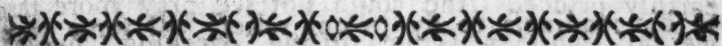
“Than thou canst die.”

He also represents the Saviour as saying,

“Sighs will convey any thing to me.”

—Were it not for our corruptions, our pride, our selfishness, it would be thought no great matter to believe the word, *the promise of God that cannot lie*. It would be as easy to believe God's word, as to credit the word of the best man upon earth. Do you start at that? I speak it to the shame of my own unbelief. Do you indeed as readily, as strongly, and without a doubt, believe the promises of your heavenly Father, as you would a promise made by your earthly parent? And yet does not your judgment readily consent, that there is an infinitely firmer foundation for believing the former than the latter. Why are we then so faithless? Go to Christ with this very complaint. *They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength. Christ saves his people from their sins*, as well as from *the wages of sin*. Bear me much upon your heart, and believe me to be your tenderly affectionate father,

J. W.



Counsel and comfort to the afflicted.

[In a letter to an eminently pious sister in law, whose younger daughter was in a very afflicted state, Mr. *Williams* suggested the following advices and consolations.]

My dear sister,

May 4, 1747.

I CAN tenderly sympathize with you. I have known what it is to part with desirable children. May you never know such piercing grief, if it be the will of our heavenly Father. — I am glad to find you can resign your dearest comforts, your *Isaacs* to the Lord. The Apostle *John* says very truly, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Indeed this is that which overcometh worldly love, and worldly fear. What are worldly losses, or worldly gains, to him whose treasure is in heaven? Or what is the loss of the dearest earthly relative to him, who can say, *My beloved Saviour is mine, and I am his?* Pain indeed will be felt; and though *the spirit of a man may sustain many infirmities*, yet sharp pains, and of long duration, will subdue the stoutest spirit and the strongest constitution; but it is a noble support, even in that case, to know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. — Dear sister, fly to the Lord in all your fears and griefs. For my part, I knew little of him, little of his all-sufficiency, little of the open access, through Jesus, which we have to him, little

of his readiness to fly to our relief, till some years ago. He then graciously condescended to make such a discovery of himself, of my relation to him, and interest in him, as I had never known before. And never did I see myself to be such a polluted worm as then. I have still great need to desire, *that I may know Christ*, with one Apostle, and as another exhorts, *that I may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. I am sure *the love of Christ passeth knowledge*. However, blessed be God, I have now for years known no anxiety. Whatsoever I want, I fly to the throne of grace for. I pour before him my words, I plead his promises, his all-sufficiency: I tell him, Lord, thou canst, thou wilt provide for me; and he hath never put my hope to shame. O that I could prevail on you to trust divine all-sufficiency, and believe, *that God is able*, and as willing as able, *to do for you exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*. It is not asking in faith, it is not trusting, but doubting, unless we believe he will, as well as can, fulfil all his promises. May you have a more abundant supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and then *we know that all things work together for good*. This is the earnest desire and prayer of, &c.

J. W.

*Worldly substance improved.*

LORD's-day, May 31, 1747. The minister hath been discoursing on our Lord's saying, *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*.

unfess. Thus we are taught true wisdom, even by iniquitous examples, and to consider all worldly riches as of a deceitful nature. Indeed, all created enjoyments are vain and dissatisfying; our happiness does not consist in the abundance of them; their abundance rather increases the miseries of life; they can do nothing for us in the hour of death, and will make our future account the more awful and difficult. O my soul, wisely improve these hints. Sit loose to the world. Catch not at riches too eagerly, nor grasp them too closely. Use them for the ends, for which they were given. Use them, as not abusing them. Be solicitous to make thyself a friend in heaven, by a right distribution of this mammon of unrighteousness. Remember the saying of Chrysostom, "A man does not become rich by laying up abundance, but by laying out abundance; that is, by laying it out for God."



The world eclipsed by a sight of Christ.

June 7, 1747. [While one of his daughters was on a visit at London, Mr. Williams wrote to her the following letter.]

My dear,

HAD you been bred and lived till this day, on the side of a forest, or in a wide open common, where you had only seen a few scattered cottages, and had known no other employ than feeding a few domestick animals, or milking a cow, nor any other conversation than that of a few coun-

try lads and lasses, how would your eyes have been delighted, and your mind enchanted, with a sight of such a town as *Kidderminster*? But now you have seen *London*, *St. Paul's*, *Ranelagh*, &c. how mean must your native place appear in your eyes, and how far must it be from exciting your wonder or admiration? — Apply this to a soul, who by faith hath seen Christ and heaven, and can call Jesus his beloved and his friend, and the joys of heaven his own. Time was when the great and gay things of this life, the treasures, the pomp, and the entertainments of this world, were the most tempting objects he could look upon; but now he looks upon the world, with all its richest and gayest scenes, as a little, mean and despicable thing. And if the world begins to flatter him again, by looking great and tempting in his eyes, he looks again to Jesus and his salvation; thus the world quickly loses all its splendor and allurements. — Have you, my dear child, had such a sight of Jesus and salvation through him? Have you seen his personal excellencies, his almighty power to save? Have you seen the inconceivable treasures of his wisdom and knowledge, how well able he is to confound all the policies of hell, and defeat Satan's most subtle devices, when he contrives mischief against his redeemed ones? Have you seen his love and compassion, and that his willingness is equal to his ability to save all that come unto God by him? Have you read this in his incarnation? Have you traced it in his labours and travels, in his preachings and pleadings with obstinate sinners all day long, and in his midnight wrestlings with God upon the cold mountains? Have you heard

heard and believed it in his kind invitations and melting language? *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* Have you seen it, in his quiet submission to cruel sufferings and bitter reproaches, in his agonies in the garden, when the tortures of his soul drew from him *strong cries and tears*? Have you seen his perfect righteousness and atoning blood, a righteousness not wrought out for himself but you, blood shed not for himself but you? Have you understood it as the language of his arms, when spread out naked on the cross, that he is ready to embrace every coming sinner? Have you heard this as the voice of every wound of his body, while his breath expired amidst his blood and groans, *Look unto me, and be ye saved*? Have you seen him procuring pardon of sin and justification unto eternal life; that he hath made satisfaction for the vilest of crimes, and the chief of sinners; that he hath a human nature which could die, and an indwelling divinity which could put an infinite value upon his sufferings, and make it an all-sufficient atonement for all your sins and guilt; that he hath fulfilled God's perfect law, which we never could fulfil, and bore the curse, which would have sunk us down to endless misery; and all this not for himself but for us? Have you seen his righteousness to be such as shall never be abolished, though the heavens are melted down, and the pillars of the earth taken away, and that he hath *finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquities, and brought in everlasting* righteousness?

righteousness? Have you been fully convinced that *All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, and that he is able to keep what is committed unto him against that day?* Have you seen him to be the faithful witness, who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, Amen, and hath the keys of hell and of death; and that whom he loves, he loves unto the end? Have you also, from a sense of your sin and misery, your guilt and corruption, your inability to save yourself, with inward grief and sincere repentance solemnly committed your soul into his hands for salvation, relying intirely upon his all-sufficiency and faithfulness? And are you frequently, in every religious duty, and in the intervals of duty, looking up to him as the *Lord your righteousness and strength?* If you have thus, and upon these accounts, committed yourself by prayer and humble dependence into the hands of Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, sincerely and earnestly desirous of his salvation in all the parts of it, salvation from sin as well as from hell, depend upon it my dear child is a believer in Christ, and shall certainly be saved.— Now, if this be your happy state and case, as I hope it is, what are all the great and gay things below the skies to you? How much more excellent and desirable do you see holiness, even in poverty and rags, than impiety and irreligion though attended with the greatest pomp and grandeur? What a rich treasure are the promises, as they are all yea, and amen, in Jesus Christ? Nor do the threatenings wear a dreadful aspect, if you have seen Jesus with an eye of faith. Even the face of God, which is dreadful to the guilty soul, you may look upon without

out dismay, since you have seen *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*. Nor need you be surprized with overwhelming fears of sorrows, or sufferings, or even death itself, since *Jesus hath abolished death, and taken away its sting*. — Happy souls that are in such a case! How careful should such be of their way and walk, lest they wound their consciences by contracting fresh guilt, sully their evidences, and mar all their comforts. *O flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul*. By no means neglect prayer, nor starve your soul for want of frequent recourse to the fountain of all grace. *Keep yourself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*. I commend you to him who is able to keep you, and am, dear child, your truly affectionate father, J. W.



Endeavours to reclaim a dissolute friend.

WEDNESDAY, July 8, 1747. Several times of late I have had some enlargement in prayer for _____, that he may be converted and saved. With this view, I wrote him a long letter last week, in which I put many searching questions to him, desiring him to put them close to his conscience. Yesterday morning, reading in Mr. *Baxter's Call to the Unconverted*, and being struck with the pungency of his arguments, it was suggested to my thoughts, that I should try to engage _____ to come every evening, and hear me read to him in that book, till I had read it through, and conclude each evening

evening with prayer. I immediately wrote him a short letter, which I begun with telling him plainly, that I was more and more convinced, he was yet in an unconverted state; that is, in an unpardoned state, and was going to hell, as fast as the wheels of time could carry him; withal signifying my firm persuasion that he might yet obtain mercy, and desiring him to come to me in the evening. He did not come, therefore this morning I sent a messenger, desiring him to come this evening. The messenger presently returned, and brought me a sealed letter. I was afraid to open it, till I had poured out my soul to God for him, and had much enlargement given me in pleading for him, which greatly animated my hope, that God will have mercy on him. When I opened the letter, I found it contained an excuse for not coming before, and a promise to come this evening. Accordingly this evening he hath been here, and finding him in a pliable disposition, I took him into a private chamber, and made the proposal to him, to which he readily agreed. I read several pages, and then he joined with me in prayer, in which I put in suit that promise, *If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* The Lord was with us of a truth. I had great freedom, boldness and confidence. ——— had sighs and groanings unutterable. We afterwards embraced and kissed each other with great affection. He complained of a hard, obdurate heart. But I hope sovereign grace will mollify it, notwithstanding all the efforts of Satan to the contrary. *I will now hear what God the Lord will*

Saints shine with borrowed Rays. 1747. 179

*will say, and attend to what he will do. O may
we never be weary of well-doing!*

(*****)

Saints shine with borrowed rays.

On a journey. Wednesday, July 22, 1747.

T WAS on the day, when sacred rest
Kind heav'n enjoins to man and beast,
Bright *Phæbus* shot an early ray
Across the chamber where I lay,
But the refulgent effluence found
My sense with downy slumbers bound.
Anon, from sleep's dominion freed,
I gaz'd around with mindful heed,
And mark'd, surpriz'd, close by my bed,
A sun-beam on the cieling spread.
I rose, this mystery to trace,
And, lo! a mirror's polish'd face,
Set to confront the God of day,
Oblique, retorts his borrow'd ray.
Just so, thought I, the Saviour gives
The graces every faint receives;
Just so with borrow'd rays he shines,
Whilst Jesus all his soul refines..
Each christian is a looking glass,
And Christ the sun of righteousness.

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Obligations to divine grace.

[To the Rev. Mr. Pearfall, he writes thus.]

Dear Brother,

August 15, 1747.

BLESSED be God, who looked upon your distress, and commanded the bitter cup to pass from you. For us to live, may it be Christ! Many talents are put into your hands, and many into mine, of which we must render an account. And the time is short. O how little do I attend to the main ends of life, as one that knows and believes I shall shortly die! I often wonder at myself, how unaffected I am with the most surprizing acts of grace. Fain would I have been a libertine in my giddy youth, and sovereign grace prevented me. Fain would I have trod the downward road. O what scenes of wickedness did I sometimes meditate! No doubt I should have carried them into practice, if opportunity and impudence had been in proportion to inclination. For ever adored be the grace of Christ, who redeemed me, not only from the guilt, but also from the power of sin, and not only from the guilt and power, but likewise from the pollution. "O what a Christ have I!" He bore my sins in his own body on the tree. I am complete in him; so complete, that there is no more conscience of sins. O what a glorious privilege, to have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience! How inexcusable am I, if I do not love much, for I verily believe

much

much hath been forgiven me? And why this grace to me? Why am I not committing sin with greediness, and filling up the measure of my iniquities? Why am I not as vile as the vilest? At least, why am I not as vile as I would have been? I am sure, that *to will* a vain, sensual, flesh-pleasing life *was present with me*, and prevalent over me, and many a time it grieved me, that I could not sin more impudently and without controul. Who changed the bias of my will, and turned the current of my affections? Who made me first dread, and then hate, the things I had dearly loved, and love the things I had loathed? Certainly it was almighty grace; nothing less could have done it. The voice that called dead *Lazarus* out of his grave, caused me, when *dead in trespasses and sins*, to hear his voice and live. But why did he exert such power, and bestow such grace on me? O infinite grace! O boundless compassion! O free, rich, unmerited, distinguishing love! And why doth he now, while I am writing, *shed abroad his love in my heart*, who, when I began to write, was as dull as a clod of earth? How many, who have lived more accurately and more usefully than I, are *feeling after him*, if haply they might find him? — Why is not this bewitching world a greater snare to me? A much less increase of its possessions insnared my heart formerly. Why does not the abundance of it overwhelm my heart, and quench the coal of devotion? When I was not possessed of half so much, he gave me to think it enough; and since that, without much plodding or projecting of mine, hath marked out my path to riches, and caused them to come rolling in

in upon me, and more and more from year to year. And now, though alas! not without a corrupt mixture, he is making his gifts matter for praise, and incentives to love, and inclines me to *make unto myself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.* *This is the victory that overcometh the world,* its smiles as well as its frowns, *even our faith.* Blessed be his name, twenty-two years ago he enabled me to despise its frowns, when they appeared threatening enough; and now, adored be his grace, he shews me better things than the Syren's enchanting smiles. O adorable Jesus, thou art *All in All* to my soul! *Let their money perish with them,* who esteem thousands and ten thousands of gold and silver worth one friendly look, one assuring word from thee. *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* Never, sure, was such grace bestowed upon such a worthless, ungrateful, unprofitable worm. — Let love with faith be the pulse, and praise the breath of our souls. So shall we have *peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* Faith and love will do wonders. Let us pray for one another. I am, wishing all grace to abound towards you, your's indeed,
J. W.

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185 *Christ calls his servants, friends.*

LORD's-day morning, October 4, 1747. How astonishing is the condescension of Jesus to all true believers! Henceforth, says he, *I call you not servants,*

servants, but I have called you friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. The great Apostle thought it an high honour to be entitled a servant of Jesus Christ. So it is, but certainly more is implied in being his friends.—Now where there is friendship, there must be a oneness of nature. We see there is a kind of friendship among the brutes; but their several associations are only of those of the same species. The ox herds not with the swine, nor the pidgeon with the crow. So man cannot strike up a friendship, but with one of his own nature. If therefore Christ calls and treats his people as his friends, there must certainly be a oneness of nature subsisting between him and them. Accordingly we read, *God was manifest in the flesh. The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* There can be no friendship between a holy God and sinful man, but in and through Christ, who unites both natures in himself.—There must also be a conformity or likeness of dispositions and tempers. *The same mind must be in us, that was in Christ Jesus. Was he holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners?* None are the friends of Christ, nor will he own them as such, in whom there is not, in a prevailing though imperfect degree, the same Christ-like disposition and temper. For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Now, O my soul, is the same mind in thee, which was in Christ Jesus? He came to do the will of his Father, who sent him, and his Father's honour was dearest to him. When death, with all its horrors, stared him in the face, so that frail nature could not but pray, *Father, save me from this hour,* he presently checks

checks himself, *But for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.* When he was in his agony in the garden, he prayed more earnestly, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt, Not my will, but thine be done.* Now is this the supreme desire and endeavour of my soul, that God may be glorified in me, by me, and upon me, whatever becomes of me, whatever advantages I must give up, and whatever scorn, contempt and reproach I am called to pass through?—Again, there must be a oneness of interest, that a cordial friendship may obtain, at least not a clashing of interests. What then is Christ's interest? In all things to have his Father glorified, and himself, who is *one with the Father*; to seek and to save that which was lost, to take away sin, and to destroy it, to subdue Satan, and to put all his enemies under his feet. Do I esteem it my best interest, to glorify God and Christ, to save souls, to subdue and suppress sin in my heart and life, and counteract the malicious designs of Satan?



Inviting a friend to the Lord's-table.

October 30, 1747. [To the same person, as April 15, 1746, and January 21, 1747.]

Dear _____

WHY do you not eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Christ, according to his command? Is it not a glorious privilege, to eat the *flesh*.

flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of Man, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world? Would you not think it a great hardship, a distressing circumstance, to be excepted by name, and forbid ever to partake of this solemnity? Have you enough of Christ? Do you enjoy as much of him as you desire? Or do you imagine you can enjoy as much of him in the neglect, as in the use, of his own prescribed means? Does not our Lord Jesus best know in what ways to manifest himself, and impart his grace, to the souls that do hunger and thirst after him? Bread and wine are in themselves means of nourishing our bodies and chearing our spirits; and it is well remarked by Mr. Herbert,

“Not in rich furniture, or fine array,

“Nor in a wedge of gold,

“Thou, who for me wast sold,

“To me dost now thyself convey;

“For so thou shouldst without me still have been,

“Leaving within me sin.

“But by the way of nourishment and strength,

“Thou creep'st into my breast,

“Making thy way my rest,

“And thy small quantities my length,

“Which spread their forces into every part,

“Meeting sin's force and art.”

Does not this figure out the design of Christ in the sacrament of his supper? Does your soul hunger? Here is spiritual bread; come and partake of it. Does your soul thirst, and droop? Here is spiritual drink, a rich cordial; come, satiate your thirst;

thirst; come, and cheer your heart with the love of Christ. Have you strength enough for every duty, and against every temptation? Is your faith strong? Are your hopes firm and bright? Does your heart burn with divine love? Are your comforts lively? Is all within as you would have it? If not, come where all supplies are freely exhibited; where you may eat and be strengthened; may drink and forget your sorrows.—Do you say, “I intend coming to the sacred feast some time, but fear I am not yet duly prepared for it?” But if you come some time, why not now? Would you come when you have more strength, or when you have less? This feast is not for those who are full, but for the hungry. It is for those who *know that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Are not you one of these? What preparation would you make? Does the Master of the feast expect a present at your hands? Yes, he does. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Come, yield yourself unto God. *Come, join yourself to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.*—Is it nothing to have a whole Christ freely exhibited to you, even Christ with all the benefits and blessings of his purchase? Certainly it is that on which your soul-prosperity much depends. Does Christ say, *These things I have said unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full?* And may not this with great propriety be applied to his institution of his Supper? Therefore, as you value growth, establishment and perseverance in grace; as you value *peace and joy*

Rejoicing in a Friend's early Piety. 1747. 187

in believing; celebrate the memorials of a dying Saviour, the all-sufficient friend of sinners. It is because I greatly desire your edification and comfort, that these things are thus proposed to you by your's, &c.

J. W.



Rejoicing in a friend's early piety.

December 12, 1747. [To a young lady, who had for some time been one of Mr. *Williams's* family.]

Dear Miss,

I REMEMBER still that you was once my charge. Though I cannot say, *I have begotten you through the gospel*; yet the share an indulgent providence allowed me therein, affords me many a delightful reflection. How transporting is the hope I have, that no less than seven young souls under my roof have been born, in a spiritual sense, within the space of two or three years! It is the life of my life. I have indeed growing hopes, that every child of mine is a child of God, and every servant of mine (I mean domestick servants) is a servant of Christ, besides two others who were only sojourners with me, *and I do and will rejoice therein*. It is more to me, than all that outward prosperity with which it hath pleased my bountiful Lord to bless me. And are you, dear miss, of that happy number? You will never be able to pay the mighty debt of gratitude and love you owe to him, *who hath saved you, and called you with an holy calling*. Do but consider what you was, when he first began to *draw you to himself with bands of*
love.

love. *At that time you was dead in trespasses and sins, without Christ, having no well-grounded hope, and without God in the world. Could you change your own heart? Did every one who heard the same word, which was made effectual to your awakening, so hear the voice of the Son of God, as to live a new life? And why was you made to hear it? As many as receive Christ, and believe on his name, are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. What praise is due to him, who hath quickened you together with Christ, and saved you by grace! O the blessedness, to be rescued from eternal misery, to which we were doomed, and to be advanced to the dignity of Sons of God, and the heirs of an incorruptible crown! Imagine you saw a condemned malefactor in his chains for execution, whose down-cast looks excite pity in every beholder. Imagine again, that you saw this piteous spectacle released from prison, his fetters knocked off, stripped of his prison-garments, arrayed in vestures of scarlet and fine linen, adorned with the royal ring, and a gold chain about his neck, made to ride in the second chariot, as Joseph, or in the third as Daniel, and made ruler over all the land, then you will have a faint idea of what sovereign grace hath, I trust, done for you. Does not all this engage you to a life of gratitude and self-denying obedience? And as this was the price of blood, the blood of the King's Son, how great are your obligations to the ransomer of your soul? — When I think of such love to my own soul, alas, how languid are my re-*

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turns of love, how feeble my essays of praise! Mon-
strous ingratitude!

"Were it not common, would not this be strange?
"That 'tis so common, this is stranger still."

My dear Madam, suffer no estrangement betwixt
God and your soul. Be jealous of whatever may
damp your love to, or enervate your faith in
Jesus. *Pray without ceasing*. Let the clock be your
monitor to ascend on high on wings of faith, and
in flames of love, as the cock to *Peter*, when he
went out and wept bitterly. The sacred flame must
be fanned, or it will be choaked with ashes. Often
warm your heart in pious conversation with ex-
perienced christians. *Watch and pray that you enter
not into temptation*. Bear me upon your thoughts in
your best moments. Assure yourself, that though you
are far distant, you yet are frequently remembered
by, dear miss, your's, &c. J. W.



Charity envieth not.

January 20, 1748. [Concerning a rival in trade,
Mr. *Williams* laid down for himself the following
rules.]

BE not at all dissatisfied, that Mr. _____ is
before me, or that he hath got some orders I
should have had, if I had been before him. The
great householder careth for all the families of the
earth, and Mr. _____ hath a family to provide for

as well as I. It is all for the best. It is as providence, unerring providence, hath appointed, who never mistakes the interests of his children. The Holy Spirit says, *Be careful for nothing. I would have you without carefulness. Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you.* Let this be the governing temper of my mind. Leave it every day to the great and wise disposer to deal out to me that measure of success in business he sees best for me. Be not only willing, but desirous, he should chuse for me. Receive disappointments, as well as prosperity, with thankfulness to him, who sees a mixture of both best for me. Labour to love Mr. — as myself, and enjoy his prosperity. Envy hurts none but the envious. Let not a thought of envy find place in my heart. God is doing his people good oftentimes, when they are ready to say, with good old Jacob, *All these things are against me.*

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A national Fast.

WEDNESDAY, February 17, 1748. O my soul, the government God hath set over us, hath proclaimed a Fast. This is the day set apart and appointed to be kept with fasting and prayer. Consider now, O my soul, how I ought to keep it, or, *what is the fast the Lord hath chosen?* — We of these kingdoms are a very sinful, God-provoking people. All ranks of men among us are become degenerate. We have apparently been growing worse. It is a most profligate, degenerate age in which we live.

live. *Iniquity hath abounded long. Religion is at a very low ebb among its professors. The love of many waxeth cold. Should I not cry and sigh for all the abominations that be done in the midst of us? And should not my soul weep in secret places for the prevalence of pride and luxury, and all that wickedness practised in the land? And should I not be deeply humbled for my own sins in particular? In order to which, should I not bring my heart and life under a strict and impartial examination, that I may discover what is the plague of my heart, and may put away whatever is evil from me. This is the Fast the Lord hath chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppressed go free, that we break every yoke, and deal our bread to the hungry. The Lord help me to keep such a fast, that if wrath be gone forth from the Lord, and evil be determined against this land, I may at least deliver my own soul.*

Reflections on autumn and spring.

Bristol, April 9. 1748. [In a letter to his wife Mr. Williams wrote.]

My dearest,

IT is pleasant to survey the works of nature, to observe new life stirring in the vegetable world, and its glorious author blessing the springing thereof. Every tree, hedge, and bush is budding, or shooting forth its leaves, and some of them begin to

to display their blossoms, beds of primroses skirt many of the banks, and bespangle the bosoms of others, while an universal verdure makes the fields and meadows look young again. How many quickening reflections should such a scene suggest to me? Shall my immortal spirit be dull, and dead, and inactive, whilst inanimate nature is operative in a thousand forms? Even the grass, which hath no cultivation, springs and shoots out its spires, and shall I, who enjoy so many and rich advantages for improvement, be like a barren clod? Even the birds, who know nothing of their creator and preserver, warble forth his praises, and shall I be silent in his praise, who know him, or rather am known of him, and am conscious of benefits and obligations so innumerable? — Very different was the scene which presented itself in my last journey in October and November. Old age was then far advanced upon the various tribes of the vegetable kingdom, and death was extending its vast empire all around. Millions of leaves were fallen, or falling, into the lap of mother-earth, which shortly shall receive you and me. Is it a melancholy thought? No; let but faith draw the vail aside, and the thought is joyful. As surely as I now behold a kind of resurrection in the works of nature, so surely shall these bodies arise from the grave. The sapless leaf is fallen and perished, and fresh buds fill and adorn every spray. So surely shall this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Let us not fear to go down into the grave. *He that raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, shall certainly raise up us also by Jesus.* Nor let us fear to trust our souls,

our immortal interests with him, *who died for us, and rose again.* As the sun with its genial beams is now chearing and invigorating all nature, and drawing forth its germinative powers; so shall our souls be drawing fresh supplies from the sun of righteousness, and be *going from strength to strength.*—Let us meet daily before the throne, till through adorable grace we ascend thither. My love to every child, servant, relation, and friend. *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.* I am, my dearest, your's most affectionately,

J. W.

Visiting, a snare to piety.

Kidderminster, June 9, 1748. [To a daughter, who was visiting her friends in a distant neighbourhood, Mr. Williams wrote thus.]

My dear child,

IT is not the bodily health, and chearfulness, and outward prosperity of my children, that I principally look at. Bear with me, if I entertain a degree of jealousy concerning the temper of your mind. You are now in a state of leisure, and among friends, who will do all in their power to render your stay with them easy and chearful. But are there not snares attending every state, and particularly *that* you are now in? The cares of a family are attended with one kind of snares; leisure, inaction, and the obliging regard of friends, with another kind. For my part, I have always found friendly visits and

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engagements had a tendency, for a time, to loosen my regards for my best friend and best interests. Such is the weakness of our minds, we can attend but to one thing at a time; and so contrary is the spirit of the world to the Spirit of God, and the interests of the world to the interests of Christ, that while we are studious to please, and oblige, and make ourselves agreeable to our friends, we naturally have our hearts and affections drawn off from God.—I do not say this, because I would have you otherwise than easy, and chearful, and obliging among your friends. Nay, I really think it is your duty, in present circumstances, to cherish and cultivate a chearful temper, and dismiss carefulness and anxiety. It may, as a means, conduce much to the recovering your health and strength. There is *a time to laugh, and a time to dance*, as well as *a time to weep, and a time to mourn*.—Yet beware of too much levity, lest your heart should thereby be estranged from God and religion. It will require you to be much upon your guard. Spend as much time as you conveniently can in secret. Commune with your own heart. converse with God in Christ. Every hour at least, and in whatever company, be lifting up your soul to God. By this means your chearfulness will be the more decent and womanly. I know not whether you thought of it, to take a pocket companion with you, and therefore I have sent you one. That you may be under the protection and blessing of the Almighty, and that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with your spirit*, is and shall be the prayer of your truly affectionate father,

J. W.

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The doubting christian comforted.

August 21, 1748. [To a brother in law, Mr. *Williams* wrote the following letter.]

Dear Brother,

MAY he that was *anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to bind up the broken-hearted*, direct me to *speake a word in season* to you. Your complaints run thus: "I cannot find that the word of God hath effectually touched me. I know I have an evil heart of unbelief, but am not feelingly sensible of it. I see reason to fear the worst, but this fear is not prevalent. I am dull and dead, formal and supine in the most solemn duties and under the most awakening sermons. My heart is most lifeless in seasons the most enlivening. So far from *serving God in spirit and in truth*, that I can scarce serve him even with my lips; oftentimes addressing him with words without a heart; at other times with neither words nor heart. And when I think on these things, I conclude myself to be in a very bad state." Were this really the judgment of God concerning your temper and state, I too should think you in a very bad state. I am glad this is only your own judgment. You are *judging yourself*, that you may *not be judged*. And now give me leave to *judge you out of your own mouth*, not what your final state is, but by the nature and tendency

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of your complaints, from what principle they flow, and whether it is not possible you are forming a wrong judgment of your state. Suppose you should hear me say, "My head aches much, or my stomach is very sick, but I do not feel it." Suppose at the same time you were convinced that I enjoyed a right exercise of my senses. What would you think of me?—I will not flatter you. I really think your state is not such as it should be, nor such as ought to be rested in. After all the sense you have of your own sinfulness, and weakness in yourself, and absolute need of a Saviour, you have not yet *come to him labouring and heavy laden*. If you had, these complaints would have been in some measure at an end; for to such as so come to him, he hath promised *rest unto their souls*. What he hath promised, he will certainly perform. Accordingly the Apostle says, *We which have believed do enter*, or, as I think it should be rendered, *are entered into rest*.—It seems to me, you are not brought to that degree of *poverty of spirit*, as to see your own nothingness and insufficiency, to be emptied of self and all self-confidence. Or if you have, yet you have not seen *the fulness that is in Christ*, a fulness of every divine perfection, a fulness of merit, of compassion, and of goodness. For if you had, you would rest upon the Saviour, and upon his immutable promise, how much soever you find matters out of order in your self. You would believe, that *he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*; and as a sinner, you would come to him, lay hold on him, and put in your claim to all the blessings of his purchase.—Though your state is not such as I could wish, yet I cannot pronounce

pronounce it bad. Though you seem not yet to have found the pearl of great price, yet it is plain you are seeking after it, and the promise is, *seek, and ye shall find.* When you say, "I would fain have such an inward principle of grace, that my duty should become my real delight and pleasure, and it should be as natural for me to serve and love God, as it is to eat and drink;" the meaning is, you would fain serve God better, and be more intirely free from corruption and sin, from backwardness to duty, and dulness in it, than any man upon earth. —He who spake as never man spake, says of this temper of mind, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.* He scruples not to pronounce such blessed, who have an unfeigned sorrow for past sins, who earnestly desire the mercy of God in Christ for pardon and sanctification, who are displeased with their own doubting and unbelief, and desire to believe in God through Christ. They are blessed, for the time draws near, when they shall have plenty of faith, and assurance of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, *for they shall be filled.* Their present desires are the motions of God's Spirit, and the true pledges of his grace. They are the beginnings of that faith, of which Christ is the author and finisher. Certainly he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, will perfect and compleat it, until the day of Jesus Christ. —If you would have peace and joy in believing, you must be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked in your own eyes. In such a temper go to Christ, and take him at his word. If you delay, till your apprehensions of spiritual things, your humiliation for sin, your zeal and fervour of devotion,

devotion, your faith, and hope, and love are such as you would have them to be, let me tell you, you will never go to Christ at all. But if, under a sense of your pollution and poverty, your guilt and unprofitableness, you will go to him, repenting, and believing, for every thing you want, he will not *send you away empty*. Do you want *to be converted and born again*? Go and tell him, he hath promised to *give you a new heart, and put within you a new spirit*. Do you want faith? Cry to him, *Lord, help mine unbelief*; *Lord, increase my faith*. Do you want repentance? Plead how *God hath exalted him, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins*. Do you want love? Can plants and flowers go up to the sun for chearing rays to make them spring and flourish? No; but the sun can visit them with genial beams. And is not Christ the sun of righteousness? Go to him with that very complaint, "Lord, I want to love thee, but I cannot. I would fain love thee more fervently than I love any mortal object, but I cannot make my love ascend. Lord, thou canst *shed abroad thy love in my heart*, and then I shall not fail to reflect thy own beams." My dear brother, if you think to get love to Christ any other way than by prayer for his love to you, you will be mistaken. It is not so much what you have done for Christ, as what Christ hath done for you, that must lay the foundation, and raise the superstructure too, of your comfort and joy. But what need I enlarge to you, who enjoy much better helps? I am, dear Sir, your affectionate brother,

J. W.

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The happiness of living by faith.

September 24, 1748. [To the same young lady as
December 12, 1747.]

Dear Miss,

I OFTEN call to mind Dr. *Preston's* excellent advice, "Not to make those things necessary to our happiness, which we may possibly be deprived of." This is the glorious privilege of them, who have chose God for their portion, that their portion is always present, and that it is not in the power of any thing to deprive them of it. With the great Apostle, they may triumph, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* They may be tortured with pain, emaciated by sickness, reduced to poverty, imprisoned, or captives in a strange land, and torn away from the embraces of the nearest partners of their blood; but still their portion abides with them; a present God, an all-sufficient Saviour, can and will support them in and under all. Nothing can make us happy in the absence of such a friend; nothing can make us miserable in his presence. Who would not covet, who would not cultivate such a friendship?—I am glad to see your last letter breathe so much of such a spirit. I am glad you are taught to seek rest in

Christ alone; not in religious exercises, however desirable as appointed means. Our tempers vary; our comforts ebb and flow; if we rest in these, we must be restless. But *Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than one word of his fall to the ground. Build your hopes upon his promise, and all the artillery of hell shall not be able to shake them. Stand upon this rock, and you *will be as mount Zion.* But if you trust in your own frame, in your own sensations, you will be *like a reed shaken with every wind* of temptation.—How hardly are we brought to this, to trust in the promise alone, or rather in the promiser? How many pious, but trembling souls have I known, and now know, whose judgment is convinced that God in Christ is the ultimate object of faith, and a sure refuge to all that shelter themselves under the shadow of his wings, and yet cannot get rid of their fears. Why? Because they only rely upon him when their affections are stirred, or when their devotion flames. But certainly it is our duty, our interest, to *trust in the Lord at all times.* This is the cure God himself proposes for the soul, *that walketh in darkness, and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* This is to *come unto Christ,* as those *that labour, and are heavy laden,* to whom he promises, *I will give you rest.* If therefore we do not find rest unto our selves, it must be because we do not come labouring and heavy laden, deeply humbled, and entirely quitting all other refuges, as poor sinners, as helpless creatures. Thus, *having no confidence in the flesh,* we are best prepared to rejoice

aspirations in favour of her parents. After magnifying her peculiar advantages, these are her expressions: "My gratitude to you, dear Sir, sure
 " should warble in the sweetest strains, and sparkle
 " with the most refined lustre. I am sure it warms
 " my heart. And indeed if it did not, it might
 " justly be numbered among the greatest absurdities
 " in nature.—My dear Papa, I again return you
 " most grateful thanks for your earnest concern for
 " my soul's prosperity. Surely it shall not all fall
 " to the ground. God will reward you for all your
 " tender care and diligent watchfulness over your
 " children's souls. I would desire to make it al-
 " ways my most earnest petition, that my dear pa-
 " rents may have blessings, doubled and redoubled,
 " returned to them again. When you come to us,
 " may a celestial band be continually hovering over
 " you, and screen you from all inconveniences and
 " disasters. Winter begins to sound an alarm. The
 " warbling songsters are growing still, and reserving
 " their melody for the returning blooming season.
 " The fragrant flowers close up their chearing as-
 " pect. The verdant meads and shady trees will
 " soon wear winter's rough attire. But this is your
 " constant happiness, to know that the bright world,
 " to which you are hastening, cannot suffer a gloom
 " amidst its most refined enjoyments; no withering
 " autumn to veil its brightest scenes.

" There everlasting spring abides,

" And never-with'ring flow'rs." &c.

None but a parent knows the heart of a parent.
 Nevertheless you cannot be insensible, that to a fond
 father

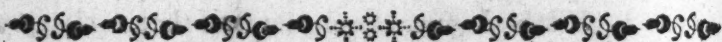
father the contents of this letter must be very grateful. Blessed be God for all his consolations, through whatever mediums. Doubt not, dear cousin, of a blessing in store for you. Salute my much honoured aunt in my name, and accept this token of love and respect, and forget not to pray for, your's, J. W.



The intercession of Christ.

OCTOBER 15, 1748. A delightful meditation I enjoyed yesterday on those words, *He ever liveth to make intercession for us.* I considered how Christ intercedes for us; that he presents his sufferings and sacrifice in our behalf and in our stead. As the High Priest went not into the Holy of Holies without blood, to make atonement for the people; so our glorious High Priest presents before God his body, that body which was sacrificed for us; and he intercedes, by earnestly desiring the forfeited blessings to be restored to us. But what are the blessings which Christ intercedes for in behalf of his people? *While I was musing upon that, the fire burned,* and I was enabled, in full assurance of faith, and with sacred joy, thus to apply, as I went on in my journey.—He intercedes for the pardon of penitent and believing sinners. *Father, forgive them.* Therefore I hope, my sins are pardoned.—He intercedes for the preservation of his people in their temptations and afflictions. *Holy Father, keep them through thy own name.* Therefore I shall be preserved and kept.—He intercedes for their sanctification.

Sanctify them through thy truth. Therefore I shall be sanctified, and be enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. — He intercedes for an union of his people with God and with one another. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they all may be one in us. Therefore I am and shall be vitally united to God in Christ Jesus. — He intercedes for their consolation. That the world may know, that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Therefore the God of peace shall fill me with all joy and peace in believing. — And finally he intercedes with the Father to give his people everlasting glory. Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. Therefore as for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. How amazing, how unchangeable is the love of our glorious Immanuel! How safely may believers trust their souls in his hand, and rest satisfied with his intercession!



Desire to do good to Souls.

SATURDAY-night, December 24, 1748. It hath long been my earnest desire and prayer, that the blessed God would make me instrumental in awakening and converting precious souls. For this purpose I took pains with many of my young friends 30 or 40 years ago. He gave me a *travailing*

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ing soul for every one of my children ; particularly, when in baptism I solemnly devoted each of them to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and for every one of those that are dead, in their last sickness, that their guilt and filth might be washed away in the blood of Christ ; and for the three which survive, more especially from the time they came severally to 17 years of age and upward. At sundry times my very heart hath been drawn out in earnest prayer for one and another, and each of them, as also for each of my domestick servants, that *Christ may be formed in them*. How far my poor prayers and endeavours have contributed to the working a saving change in them, as also in some other young persons whose parents desired that they might for a while be under my roof, perhaps God only knows. However I have the joy of *seeing*, or hearing, that they all *walk in the truth*. I have the joy of hoping and believing, I think, on good grounds, that no less than *seven* young souls have been born to God in my family within these three or four years. May all the praise be ascribed to him *who worketh all in all*. — I am, just now, not without hopes, that the Lord hath made use of my poor endeavours to awaken one, if not two, who before seemed to lie fast asleep in sinful security. Very lately at —, after transacting business with a dissenter in that town, among other things which fell from him in conversation, he let me know, that he had once in his life failed or broke. Presuming thence that he had paid his debts only by composition, I asked, whether he had ever paid the surplus, or what was due to his creditors over and above the composition ?

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He owned he had not. I therefore told him, with a degree of stern solemnity, that he must do it. I even asked him, how he would dare to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, his just debts not being paid, and he being able to pay the whole? Many more things I said to the same purpose, and in the most solemn manner; for he appears to be in affluent circumstances.—The same person told me also, that he intended to ride out in the country next day. I enquired, what necessity there was of his travelling from home on the Lord's-day? Perceiving there was none, I laboured to dissuade him from his purpose, but could not find that my dissuasions availed any thing. I saw nothing of him at the two first meetings, but in the evening he came, and sat in the table-pew, where I also sat. He seemed to be greatly affected under the sermon. I was very glad to see how he melted under the word, and resolved to spend part of the evening with him. Accordingly, I went to his house, and spent about two hours with him in very free conversation and prayer. I spared not to set his sins in order before him, and to shew him the necessity of repentance, and faith in the blood of Christ, in order that he might obtain acceptance **E** with God. He wept sore, and freely owned to me many convictions he had had, and resolutions he had formed, which had all come to nothing, and that to that day he had lived in the neglect of prayer, but signified his conviction of the necessity of it, and his resolution, by the help of God, to begin and constantly keep up prayer in his family. I prayed with them, had great enlargement, and he, by his groanings and tears, seemed

to be much engaged. I took an opportunity of speaking to his wife, who seems to be a truly pious woman, and endeavoured to convince her of the necessity of his paying all his just debts, if he would make his peace with God by repentance and faith in the blood of Christ. She seemed to hearken to me. He accompanied me afterward to my inn, and promised to act agreeably to the advice I had given him. Since that I have wrote to him to the same purpose. May the Lord set my addresses home to his heart!—Before I entered on the same journey, a young man of ——— desired leave to travel with me. I quickly found my companion had conversed with some *Deists*, and though he would not own it, had too much given in to their infidel notions. Many a dispute we had upon the road, while we travelled together almost a fortnight. Many a time I had it in my mind to talk with him in the most searching manner. At last providence gave me a most fit opportunity at ———, a night or two before we were to part. Many a struggle I had with myself, but at length all my foolish objections were silenced, and I conversed with him, about three hours, concerning *the deep things of God*. Before I had done, he seemed to be convicted, and frankly owned his want of love to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ, and appeared to be sensible he was no more than a nominal christian. This gave me great encouragement, and I parted with him at ———, with full intention to prosecute, by writing, what had been begun in conversation. When I returned home, I found a letter he had sent me a few days before, and it was no small disappointment to me,

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to find it was about a small pecuniary affair, but not a word about the state or interest of his soul. His letter lay before me many weeks, before I found an inclination to answer it. At last I could forbear no longer. I wrote to him the 17th of last month. He answered me about 10 or 11 days after. But O how was I transported with joy, to find, that God had set home the searching queries and considerations I had sent him, to the awakening and deep conviction of his conscience? How honestly and nakedly does he lay before me the temper and unusual workings of his soul? He owns, he hath no love to the duty of prayer, that he can omit it, and go a whole day without any sensible concern. He laments the sad state he is in, and seems to be in good earnest in his applications to the throne of grace, through a Redeemer, for deliverance from the body of sin and death. I have wrote to him a second time, and he hath replied, and discovers a fear, a jealousy, lest he is still unconverted, but seems to be in good earnest for securing his immortal interests. May the Lord carry on and perfect the good work, he hath begun in his soul!

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Cherishing serious impressions.

December 30, 1748. [In a letter to his fellow traveller, mentioned the 24th instant, Mr. Williams says.]

Very dear Sir;

YOUR letter hath filled me with the greatest cheerfulness. My soul rejoices and exults in
your

your salvation. How many times, and with what transports of joy, have I, on my bended knees, been praising and adoring the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for this grace vouchsafed to you, and particularly for making me the unworthy instrument of it! The news hath reached heaven, and there hath been joy over you in the presence of God; and shall not I rejoice? — Perhaps, Sir, you fear that I triumph before the victory; and I wonder not, if you do. I was encouraged to write to you in the manner I did, because you freely acknowledged your fears, that you was destitute of the love of Christ, which I had been describing. Had you justified yourself, instead of confessing your fears, it would have discouraged me from writing; but your frankness convinced me, that the Spirit of God had in some measure opened your heart to receive an all-sufficient Saviour. — Our Lord says, *When the comforter is come, he will reprove, or convince, the world of sin, because they believe not on me.* Whence it is plain, that not believing in Christ is the sin of the world. But persons will continue in unbelief, till they are convinced of their need of a Saviour, and of his willingness to save them. And if their life and conversation are unbleameable in the sight of men, it is the hardest thing in the world to fasten conviction on such. None but the Spirit of grace can do it. I remember, some years ago, in conversation with two gentlemen of my acquaintance, one of which had been a notorious debauchee, the other a boasting pharisee, I laboured to convince them both of their sinfulness, in order to lead them to Christ. The former seemed to yield

yield a little, but the other was too full of his own righteousness to admit any conviction. Thus men love darkness, love to be in the dark as to this important piece of self-knowledge: they will not submit their hearts and lives to a strict and impartial examination, for fear they should be convicted. Their pride will not suffer them to think so ill of themselves, as their state deserves, so they bolster themselves up to their everlasting undoing. —Faith and love always go together. In proportion as faith believes the promise, and relies upon the Saviour, love will certainly embrace him. But neither of them can find place in the heart, that is not sensible of its need of Christ. The inviting promise is made only to such as *labour and are heavy laden* under the guilt and burthen of sin. If the soul is brought to this, and is made sensible of its sin and danger, and of its utter inability to save itself, then the work is more than half done. When a man finds, that he hath never loved God with all his heart, and yet sees that he cannot be saved without such a supreme and predominant love to God, he is ready to look round about him for help, and is glad to accept of help from Christ. At first he can scarcely believe, when he hears Jesus say, *Look unto me, and be ye saved; Come unto me, and ye shall find rest for your souls.* But the more he tries to look unto Christ, and come to him, and trust in him, the more strength he receives from Christ, and the more hope he entertains, that *Christ loved him, and gave himself for him*, and therefore he cannot but love Christ the more. How delightful is that love, when the heart
and

and soul is drawn out after Christ!—And have not you, my dear friend, felt something of the power of Christ drawing out your desires after him? Though, from a sense of your impotence, you cry, Where is my inclination? Where is my will? Yet have you not, in some measure, found his grace *working in you, both to will and to do?* Whence come all your complaints, if there is not a will to be as God would have you be, and to do what God would have you do? Whence come such pious breathings, “O might this Holy Spirit dwell with me? &c.” Is not this a hopeful pledge, nay, *fruit of the Spirit?* Is he not producing in you *a spirit of grace and supplication?* Is not this a sign of the new birth? I heard a pious old gentleman say, about thirty years ago, “God hath no still-born children.” No, we came into the world crying, and so we do into the new world, the world of grace. It was Christ’s remark concerning Paul’s first change, *Behold he prayeth.*—But remember, Sir, you have but just drawn the sword against your spiritual enemies. Expect now to be vigorously, and perhaps incessantly, attacked with new temptations. You have need to *take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* If Satan finds he cannot keep you back any longer from *striving to enter in at the strait gate*, he will do all he can to hinder you, to distress you, or to make you ashamed of the good ways of God. He hath a thousand treacherous arts to *beguile unstable souls.* Be continually on your guard. *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.*

temptation. And under every new temptation fly to the captain of your salvation, who is mighty, who hath vanquished all the hosts of hell, and reserves them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, and who, having himself suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted. What a glorious privilege is this, that we have leave and encouragement to trust in him at all times! I heartily commend you, and will commend you, to his blessing and grace, who is able to build you up, to keep you from falling, to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Write to me again soon. I shall long to hear how you go on. Be not faithless, but believing. Be assured of the constant prayers of dear Sir, your's &c.

J. W.

*Boldness at the throne of grace.*

FEBRUARY 10, 1749. I think I have not met with a more humbling, self-emptying thought, or a thought which hath pleased me better, than in reading *Herbert's poem*, entitled *Gratefulness*, where he is pleading with God, and fetching an argument from the many mercies God had already bestowed upon him, to give him one thing more; viz. a thankful heart, without which all his mercies would be, in a manner, lost upon him. He then adds,

“ But

" But thou didst reckon, when at first
" Thy word our hearts and hands did crave,
" What it would come to, at the worst,
" To save.

" Perpetual knockings at thy door,
" Tears sullyng thy transparent rooms,
" Gift upon gift, much would have more,
" And comes.

" This notwithstanding, thou went'st on,
" And didst allow us all our noise,
" Nay, thou hast made a sigh and groan
" Thy joys."

What is there, that sinful worms are prone to value themselves upon, more than their prayers and penitential tears? In what a just and pride-mortifying light hath this devout writer set these very productions of ours, which, I fear, even many protestants are ready to look upon as almost meritorious? It is true, asking, seeking, and knocking at mercy's door is our duty; Christ hath commanded it, and hath annexed gracious promises. But in itself what is it, that it should merit mercy at the hand of God? Just as much as a beggar's knocking, and crying loudly and importunately, at my door, for an alms; and his persisting, after I have relieved his present wants, to knock and beg still more importunately for more and greater gifts; and even refusing to give over, unless I give him, or at least promise him, enough to maintain him as long as he lives. Nay there is less merit in my asking of God; for God hath made me a debtor to the poor, whereas he owes me nothing.—Is not this a fair repre-

representation of the case? At first, when a poor sinner is made deeply sensible of his lost condition, and how he stands every moment exposed to divine vengeance, what would he give for a pardon? He wants nothing else but a pardon. How glad would he be to be assured he shall not fall under condemnation? When he hath obtained this, nothing less will serve his turn than a title to a kingdom, and that not an earthly one; no, he would not be contented with all the dominions of King George. Nothing short of the kingdom of heaven will suffice his large desires. Well, when he hath cleared his title, and is assured he is, and shall be, *a king and priest unto God, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ*; then he begs to wear the royal robe of Christ's own preparing, and be clothed with *the wedding-garment*, and be adorned with the most brilliant jewels, even all the train of christian graces, nor ever thinks himself fine enough. Nay, he is not content without *gold tried in the fire, that he may be rich*. And lest this should not be sufficient, he insists upon having *bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth*. In short, he asks for gift upon gift, and the more he receives, the more he covets, and therefore is perpetually knocking and crying at heaven's door. Nor is he at rest, unless he be brought every day, if it were possible, every hour, into the presence of the great King, and no less a personage than the King's Son must introduce him, and be his Advocate. And while he is there, if he is not treated as a courtier, as the King's friend, he is quite discouraged.

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couraged.—But by all this, pray who is the gainer? And wherein is the King benefitted? How astonishing is the divine patience, which allows us all our great importunity! How rich the grace, which bids us *pray without ceasing, and in every thing by prayer and supplication let our requests be made known unto God!* This is the more wonderful, considering in what a careless, and too often in a rude manner, we address the divine majesty. Do we not approach the great God with less care and reverence, and more unprepared, than if we were going into the presence of King George? But is there any proportion, or comparison, between a mortal man, and the King eternal, immortal, invisible?

O may I at the morning ray,
Begin with prayer the rising day;
In praises bid my soul arise,
And with the sun ascend the skies.

As that proceeds, my zeal improve,
And glow with ardour of thy love;
Nor cease, but with the setting sun
My evening worship be begun.

And may the gloom of solemn night
To sacred thought my soul invite;
While day descends, and planets rise,
Ascend, my soul, above the skies.

Ascend, and tread the milky way,
To thy grand palace, Lord of day;
Thy courts admire, for favour sue,
Or friendship with my God renew.

Great

Man's commendation I nor seek, nor love ;
But will, when render'd me, for him improve.

All this notwithstanding, I do think commendation does, or hath a tendency to do, me hurt. It pinions my muse, cramps my invention, and enervates what genius my Maker hath given me. Meditations on Christ, and communion with him, do me abundantly more good. I think there is nothing I covet more than daily communion with God in Christ, and intire resignation to his will. There is nothing I desire more than, through divine grace, to be able to say,

By a wise providence I'm brought to this—
Dead to all creatures my affection is.
To every joy and pleasure here below
My heart hath giv'n the sacrificing blow.
Christ's kingdom to support, to serve, maintain,
This wish was lost, and with reluctance slain ;
Yet e'en to this now chearful I resign—
Useless am I, or vile ? Thy will be mine.
This one, this sole ambition I retain—
O may with me my Jesus still remain !
Dwell in my heart, do for me all I need !
On him to live, and ever on him feed,
Sufficient this. May but this bliss abide,
I shun not to be stripp'd of all beside.

This end whilst I with studious care pursue,
I'm led to Christ by motives not a few ;
And each new mean, my Saviour to address,
Inspires a joy, no language can express.
However riches, learning, knowledge grow,
Not all of these could e'er transport me so.

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Being

Being with Christ, sums up the heav'nly state;
 And thus my soul does heav'n anticipate.
 By swift believing thoughts on him employ'd,
 A heav'n on earth my soul hath oft enjoy'd;
 Such light, and peace, and joy possess the mind,
 'Tis heav'nly dawn, 'tis purity refin'd.
 I to expressless contemplation soar,
 Whilst Christ, God's word and wisdom, I adore.
 Him, the creation's archetype, I see,
 In whom exist, from all eternity,
 Original ideas infinite.
 Of all his hands have form'd in worlds of light:
 Nor less his works in lower worlds declare.
 The substance he, the creatures shadows are.
 To pass through death, this reconciles my mind;
 Sure, what I lose below, in him to find.
 'Tis this to him directs my frequent flight;
 When sensual joys afford a dear delight—
 I think—What richer sweets in him are found—
 More lasting blessings shall in Christ abound.
 And when ought choice, or lovely, is deny'd,
 In him such is plentifully supply'd.
 Terrestrial riches suit not my desire;
 These I exert no labour to acquire;
 Too mean I count them, to engage my care.
 Occasions to do good, my riches are;
 With all that helps to burnish and refine
 My thinking pow'rs, and make them brighter shine.
 Riches unknown in Jesus I possess,
 And all my wants before his presence cease.

I have told you, brother, what would be, rather
 than what are, the real workings of my heart.
 Alas!

Alas ! I frequently find myself immersed in sense, immersed in worldly cares, and attached to sensual enjoyments and gratifications. But this thought helps to reconcile me to death, that as soon as I have closed my eyes on all mortal scenes, I shall be absolutely free from all their attachments. Then shall my unpinioned spirit fully aspire towards the centre of its supreme wishes, and enter into joys, of which all my former sensations afford me very low and imperfect ideas. I account it a sad and pitiable case, when the hearts of old people, for such you and I are, *cleave to the dust*, and endeavour to take a faster and faster hold of what they must so speedily and necessarily be divorced from. It is more than time for such to be advised by the late pious and ingenious Mr. Reynolds,

“ Thus let it be our work and rest

“ To learn the labours of the blest,

“ Loosen from clay, and upwards move,

“ As candidates for realms above.”

May the approaches of death to us, be rather desired than shunned, be rather joyful than terrible, and may we be assured, that when it is come, we shall change our place, not our company, nor altogether our employment. — The Lord increase your work amongst precious souls, and your strength in proportion. I dare not but pray for you, and hope you cannot omit praying for, your's, &c. J. W.

from all their stains, and brings them into his presence beautified with his beauty, clothed and adorned with his best robe, and most brilliant jewels, even all the train of christian graces. The robe, they wear, is of his own working. Their graces are wrought in them by his own Spirit. O my soul, hast thou *bought of him eye-salve*, and applied it, and is thy dim sight thereby cleared? Dost thou *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, and the bread and water of life? Hast thou put *on the wedding garment*? Art thou *clothed with humility*? Art thou mean and vile, yea nothing in thy own eyes? Thou art very prone to pride; and who gave thee to see thy own deformity, with thy Lord's transcendent loveliness? Thy appetite was keen after *the husks* and trash of this wilderness; who gave thee to relish heavenly fruits? Thou wast all over defiled, yea wallowing in filthiness; who hath cleansed thee? Thou wast covered with rags; who hath so richly clothed thee, and put upon thee beautiful ornaments? O that I could love my Lord in proportion to his loveliness, trust him in proportion to his power and faithfulness, and praise him according to his grace and bounty!

Sympathy with the afflicted.

[To the same sister in law, as in May 4, 1747.]

Dear sister,

May 17, 1749.

YOUR pious letter opened the sluices of tenderness, and sent me to my closet. Indeed I do sympathize with you, and at the same time

rejoice over you. Doubt not, that our good God will either cause *this bitter cup to pass from you*, or put such ingredients into it, as shall make it more than palatable. He is certainly too wise to mistake his children's interest, and too good to neglect it. *Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies.* Either the child shall yet recover, and then this *return of the clouds after the rain* is for the trial of your faith and resignation, that you may taste a double sweetness in the mercy; or else the Lord will give you what is far better in lieu of what he takes away. It is my earnest desire and prayer, that if he is pleased to take away, he will first give in such an abundant supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that she may go off triumphantly, as her good aunt did, and so commend the ways of God, and particularly early piety to all around her. — Dear sister, I am glad to find you at the foot of mercy. There I have chosen to lie till my latest breath, nor do I desire a better place to all eternity. There lie still. I do not mean, there lie inactive, but there lie continually. I know no other situation so safe, so peaceful, so joyful. [Whilst I lie at the divine footstool, sensible I am nothing, and at the same time see myself compleat in Christ, I find nothing can harm me, nor not afflictions, nor death itself. I am truly glad to find you laying yourself there and all you have. Blessed be God, who gave you this temper, this absolute resignation. He is better to you therein than ten children could be. To his blessing and grace I commend you, and all your's, particularly the dear child. I am, &c.

J. W.

Clearing

Clearing up a title to heaven.

May 24. 1749. [In a letter to the same gentleman as December 30. 1748, Mr. Williams says,]

Dear Sir,

YOU say nothing in your last letter of the state of your soul. O my friend, *one thing is needful*, and that one thing should be uppermost. How is it with you? Are your hopes strong? Are they well-grounded? Have you a strong, a practical belief and persuasion, that there is indeed a state of perfect, everlasting blessedness? And if you have a firm belief that there is a heaven of everlasting rest with God and Christ, with angels and saints, can you forbear contemplating it? Can you forbear enquiring after your title to it? Can you have ease or peace in your mind, before you know whether your everlasting portion will be there, or whether it will be in *the blackness of darkness for ever*? If your title be clear, can you forbear meditating on that most delightful of all subjects?—Suppose you were a minor, and were to enter on the possession of a large estate, when you came of age; could you forbear thinking of it? Would it not fill your mind? At least, would you not have some pleasing thoughts of it every day? And is there any proportion, or comparison, between ten thousand a year, and a mansion in the new *Jerusalem*? Suppose your title were not quite so clear, as to exclude all doubt

concerning it, would you not run and ride for evidences, and stick at no pains to clear it? Suppose it were a free gift from the King, and you had the royal patent under his sign manual, how would you rejoice? How highly would you esteem and extol, how dearly love the royal Donor? Would you think any service too great, too difficult, which you could possibly render? — Apply all this seriously, and impartially judge by the fruits of faith whether you do indeed believe the heavenly rest. If your belief of it be weak and ineffectual, it is as good as none. *O* beware of that faith, which does not produce suitable works. An unoperative faith is a dead faith. Let me beg of you to peruse attentively *Mr. Baxter's Saints everlasting Rest*. I have read it over and over. Blame my judgment, if you do not find it one of the most soul-enriching books next to the Bible. Believe me to be, dear Sir, your soul's well-wisher, J. W.

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Success in praying with a poor man.

FRIDAY, June 30, 1749. I have been conversing with one of my workmen concerning the state of his soul, and find reason to hope he is awakened, and brought under a sense of his sinful, lost, undone state, and his absolute need of a Saviour. I asked him, how long he had been under a concern for his soul? I had the pleasure to hear him tell, that his deep concern for his soul began, whilst I was praying with him and his wife, about three

three years ago, when they were so distressed by affliction in their own persons and several of their children, and that this was the expression in particular, which was set home upon his conscience, and which, he says, he shall never forget; "O thou, who tookest or foundest Manasseh among the thorns, and when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him." He could not but think his circumstances at that time might most fitly be compared to thorns, and the thorns pricked his conscience. I remember my heart was mightily drawn out in pity and compassion to them, and to him in particular, and likewise in very earnest desires after his conversion. The minister called on him soon after, and prevailed with him to set up family-prayer. Blessed be God, who hath in any measure heard the voice of my supplication. May it appear, in his life and conversation, that convictions have been followed with sound and saving conversion!



The nominal christian. **F**RIDAY. **JULY 14, 1749.** The other morning I was taking a solitary walk in a path I had never trod before. I stopped a little to look into the river. The most remarkable thing I observed, was a number of water-spiders, a young fry, treading the surface of the water, rowing against the stream, in which they seemed to keep stroke, rank and file, but

but still continued just where they were at first. I stood viewing them some minutes, and observed, that though with repeated strokes and incessant labour they were still springing all forward, yet, being borne gently down the stream, they lost as much as they got, just keeping their position and distance from each other, not getting an inch of *ground*. In that situation, for *ought* I could see, they were likely to continue days and weeks, to come, if not to the end of their existence, unless the rapidity of a flood should bear them down, and force them to quit their stations. — I was considering to how little purpose was all their labour and toil; of what use could they be in the creation; that, as God had made the earth and all things in it for the service of man, and had made nothing in vain, for what use or intent hath he made these? Presently a thought was started, which became a subject of meditation to the end of my walk. — See here, thought I, a lively emblem of a nominal christian. He makes a profession, treads a circle of duty, and *does many things*, but still he is where he was. *They come unto thee, saith the Lord to Ezekiel, as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them. They hear, they read, they pray; but for want of a principle of holiness in their hearts, they cannot increase with the increase of God; but, after ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, are still where they were. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Like as these tread the surface of the water, and never dive or bathe themselves in it, such is the hypocrite with*
respect

respect to religion; he only treads the surface of a religious duty or ordinance, and does every thing superficially. What a piteous case is it, to be labouring all our days, and lose all our labour! What matter of thankfulness is here for those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and are carried up against the stream of their corrupt affections, temptations, and carnal appetites, and are getting still nearer and nearer to the fountain! Surely such cannot be silent in his praises, *who hath loved them with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness hath drawn them.*

Desiring God above all.

SATURDAY-night, August 12, 1749. I have been walking this evening, and as I went along, was begging God to give me a text, and assist my meditation. The words impressed on my mind were, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.* There is a God in heaven. He is my God. I have none in heaven, I have none on earth, comparable with him in my esteem. Then as surely as God is in heaven, he will bring, he will receive me thither. *My flesh and my heart will fail, must fail; and let them fail, since God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* This God is my God for ever and ever, and will be my guide even unto death. I have chosen him for my God and portion. But I should never have chosen him, if he had not chosen

me first, and directed my choice. I should never have loved him, if he had not first loved me with everlasting love, and with loving kindness drawn me. What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies toward me?

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Setting the Lord always before us.
August 26, 1749. [In a letter to the same gentleman as May 24, Mr. Williams says,]

MY mind hath been much impressed, every day, for a week past, with that text, *I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.* It is a point of vast importance. I understand by it, not only a firm assent to, and hearty belief of, those two attributes of God, his omniscience and omnipresence; but likewise a practical consideration of them, or an actual applying them to the government of our lives. And we must thus set him before us, as the supreme, the most holy, righteous, and the only law-giver, and as a bountiful rewarder of the obedient, as well as a severe and just punisher of the disobedient. Not that we must necessarily think of God's omniscience and omnipresence every moment of our lives, and actually apply our belief of these to the minutest actions of our lives. No, but we ought to live under such an habitual sense of them, as may influence the general course of our lives; more particularly,

particularly, in times of great temptation, either from prospects of pleasure, or from difficulties and dangers; as also in seasons of religious worship, whether publick or private. In a time of prosperity, health, liberty and fulness, we should make use of this as an antidote against the poisonous snares of such a state. In a time of adversity, this should compose our spirits, and reconcile us to the divine dispensations, considering that God allots no more afflictions to his people, than he sees to be good for them: and how bitter soever the cup is, which he puts into their hands, it is of his own mixing. — The advantages of thus setting the Lord always before us are inexpressible. It would give a check to the first risings of impure, unchaste desires, and inclinations to fraud, dishonesty, or covetousness. It would be a most impenetrable shield against, and preservation from, temptation. As *Joseph* successfully argued, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* And *Nehemiah* could say, *So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord.* It would make us more watchful over our hearts and thoughts. Then do we keep our hearts diligently, and with all keeping, when we consider, that the eyes of the Lord are as a flame of fire, and that he searcheth the thoughts and intents of the heart. It would be a good preparative for every religious duty, and would prevent distractions therein, as well as many careless neglects of duty. It would excite us to frequent ejaculatory prayer all the day long, which is an excellent means of increasing in holiness. If we were in our nonage, and were in the presence of our earthly father all day, we should think of many things to say to him,

him,

him, and ask of him. Setting the Lord always before us, would be a sharp spur, and a quickening motive, to all holy actions. It would greatly promote humility in our temper, and in our whole deportment. We should be ashamed to give ourselves proud airs in the presence of King George; how much more then in the presence of the King of kings? It would tend to make us sincere and upright in the whole course of our lives, as it would lead us to think, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.* It would tend to prevent, or cure, that extreme carefulness and solicitude we are so prone to about the affairs of this life. And finally, it would help us to rely upon God in every strait and exigence in life, and at the hour of death. *I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope.*—I am persuaded, that the great difference apparent in the general conversation of a good man and a mere nominal christian, and likewise between a good man and himself at different times, may be traced up to this source. As *Moses's face shone, when he came down from the mount*, where he had so long and so intimately conversed with God, so whoever they be that *set the Lord always before them*, it will be seen in their conversation. Happy they, who can set the Lord before them, not only as their supreme Lord, and omniscient judge, but as their indulgent Father, Friend, and Saviour.—I am well satisfied with your views in approaching the Lord's-table. May you and I always
make

make our approaches there with *desires to see Jesus*. May he be *known of us in breaking of bread*; and may we never see his body represented as broken, without broken hearts. May the cup of *blessing* be to each of our souls the *communion of the blood of Christ*. I agree with you, that the Table of the Lord ought not to be too severely guarded. May all that are admitted there, have knowledge to *discern the Lord's body*. May they all look upon the distribution of the elements as an exhibition of Christ with all his benefits. May they all have faith to receive Christ, and to feed upon him. And may they all have unfeigned repentance, and sincere love to Christ, such as are productive of new obedience.

—The tea came safe to hand, but it hath lost that elegant flavour it had when we drank of it at —; owing, I suppose, to its conveyance in paper, which, being very porous, easily admits effluvia from other goods packed up with it, and emits effluvia from the tea. Such are the moral tendencies of evil communications among men, which nothing will prevent, like canisters for tea, but *taking to us the whole armour of God*. Had the tea been packed up with cloves, mace and cinnamon, it would have been tinged with those sweet spices. So *he that walks with wise men shall be wise*. He that converses with heaven-born souls, whose *conversation is in heaven*, whose *treasure*, and whose *hearts are there*, will catch some sparks from their holy fire; but *evil communications corrupt good manners*. I have put the tea into a canister, and am told it will recover its original flavour again. So the pious soul, who hath received some ill impressions from vicious or vain conversation,

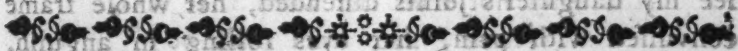
conversation, will, by retiring from the world, by communing with his own heart, by heavenly meditation, and by fervent prayer, recover his spiritual ardor. Have you not experienced, in their turns, all the consequences I have mentioned as proceeding from such like premises? I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

J. W.

God's gift of his Son.

WEDNESDAY, September 6, 1749. Come, O my soul, contemplate the love of God in giving his own, his only Son, to be my Saviour. How could I have borne, how could I now bear, to see a child of mine stripped, scourged with uncommon severity before thousands of spectators, treated with the utmost scorn, most barbarously insulted, and then put upon the rack? How could I bear to see my daughter's joints distended, her whole frame convulsed with pain, her eyes rolling in anguish, and at last fixing upon me with anxious looks, and to hear her cry out to me for help and pity? How would every bowel roll within me, to see her in such extremity of pain, in the agonies of death, and find myself incapable of affording her any relief? But do I love any child of mine, as the blessed God loves his own, his only begotten son? And what are the sufferings I have described, to those of the Son of God? O the unmeasurable love of God to a sinful world! He saw, he appointed the agony and bloody sweat, the scourges, the thorns, the

the nails, and the spear, which his Son endured to redeem rebel-worms, to redeem them from hell, their deserved portion, and advance them to heaven, which they had not at all deserved. Can such love be fathomed? Can such grace be estimated? What have sinners to render to him for such love? Am I interested in this love? Do I share, and shall I for ever share, in the fruits, the blessings, the benefits of this redemption? And does not my soul say, *What shall I render to the Lord?* Blessed Jesus, what shall I render unto thee, who didst endure the cross, and despise the shame for the sake of worthless me? And shall I not love thee? Shall I not praise thee? Shall I not live to thy glory? Shall I not absolutely devote myself, my all, to thee? *Unto him that loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, and hath made me a king and a priest unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.



Chearful views of a future state.

NOVEMBER 7, 1749. While I was waiting for my breakfast in my inn at Beaconsfield, I observed, on a pane of the parlour window, the following lines.

- “Distrust and darkness of a future state
- “Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate.
- “Death in itself is nothing; but we fear
- “To be, we know not what, we know not where.”

I pitied

I pitied the ingenious author. The lines were often revolved in my thoughts that day, and in the evening, being alone at *Watlington*, my reflections on them were spun out in the following manner.

At thy command I meekly yield

My body to the dust;

Jesús, I trust in thee alone,

And know in whom I trust.

Fix thou the time. The time is fixt

In the divine decree;

Call, when the time is fully come,

And I will answer thee.

My flesh and soul I give to thee

In their united state;

And is it more to trust thee, Lord,

With each, when separate?

I claim thy promise, here below,

To come and dwell with me;

And why not trust the word that says,

"Where I am, thou shalt be?"

Thy glorious angels stood prepar'd,

Soon as the beggar died,

His parting spirit to convey

To faithful Abram's side.

In all my ways those morning stars

Have been my daily guard;

And will they not, when loos'd from clay,

Direct me to my Lord?

Soon as pale death hath clos'd my eyes,

Those radiant sons of light

Are

to take away my most important relative, I hope, with Aaron, to hold my peace. — One little incident let me mention to you. I crossed over to the Isle of _____, intending to return to _____ the next day. A horse was lent me from _____ to _____, but the vessel was gone off sooner than usual. A butcher's apprentice, a youth about seventeen, was sent to bring back the horse, whom I took up behind me, and returned to _____. Having a companion, I had a mind to make the best I could of him, and do the best I could for him. I began with the Ten Commandments, catechising him, expounding them to him, and inculcating them upon him. He seemed to drink in knowledge, as the thirsty earth drinks in the rain; saw clearly the reasonableness of every command, and his answers most humbly, and tenderly, and thankfully echoed to all I told him. When we were come to the last mile, I thought it time to ask him, if he could so carefully and punctually observe all these commandments, as thereby to obtain heaven? He roundly answered, Ay, I hope so. I then laboured to undeceive him, assuring him, that no man, no, not the holiest and best man upon earth could do it. At this he seemed astonished. I then, in the plainest manner I could, set before him the gospel method of salvation by Jesus Christ, and what a friend the Lord Jesus Christ is to us sinners. The poor youth could not sufficiently express his thankfulness; told me often he had never heard so much before, and promised me over and over to read, and pray, and follow every rule I prescribed him, and when he had done all, trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. I persuaded him

him to apply himself to my son in law, to whom I would speak on his behalf, to give him *Baxter's Call*, and other books. The lad seemed ravished and amazed at what he had heard. I was highly delighted with my disappointment, and should be glad to meet with such a one every day of my life, be the issue what pleases God.



Lukewarmness lamented.

December 23, 1749. [In a letter to the same gentleman as May 24, and August 26, 1749. Mr. Williams says.]

Dear Sir,

YOU express shame for your slow advances in the way of religion and duty, and for the coolness of your love and gratitude to your Creator and Redeemer, and of your zeal for their honour and interest. It is well, that you are sensible of your short-comings in these respects. It is better still, if you are filled with a humble, holy shame on these accounts. I have reason enough to take up the same lamentation; and so, I believe, hath the most eminent saint upon earth, in some degree. We none of us bear that love and gratitude to God and Christ, or zeal for their honour and interest, which our obligations thereto require and call for. But let us beware how we deceive ourselves in a matter of infinite importance. It is a sad state to be *lukewarm*, neither cold nor hot. It is better, in our Saviour's judgment, to be cold, than

than neither cold nor hot. There is an absolute need of a cure. How may this lukewarmness be cured? The infallible recipe from the great physician is this. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* Wonderful condescension! He does not command us as a sovereign, but counsel us as a friend. Christ will have none but a willing people. All his soldiers must be volunteers. What is this gold, but faith and holiness? What is the white raiment, but the righteousness of the saints, with which it was granted, that the Lamb's wife should be arrayed? So that it was not a righteousness of her own, but a granted, a given righteousness, even the meritorious righteousness of Christ imputed to her. What is this eye-salve, but the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit? As for Christ's counsel, that we should buy these things of him, it refers to that prophetic and evangelical invitation, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* How is it possible we should give our Saviour an adequate price for his heavenly blessings? No, his grace is free. Yet something is implied in our buying them, and what can it be but humble, and obedient believing in him? That is all the price we can possibly give. Accordingly we find the promise of eternal life so often made to believing. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath everlasting life;*

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HH

life; and he that believeth not, or disobeyeth, the Son, shall not see life. It is hard to believe, because it is contrary to our natural pride, empties the creature, humbles the soul, and makes us to see ourselves to be nothing, that the Lord alone may be exalted. To the renewed soul, it is easy, yea delightful, so to believe, as to lie at the feet of Jesus in low prostration, and there he will desire to lie in time and to all eternity. When he is thus abased, he is most safe. Thus may your soul prosper. I am, dear Sir, your's, &c. J. W.

(*) (*) (*) (*) (*) (*) (*) (*) (*) (*) (*)

Inculcating resignation.

October 27, 1750. [To a daughter, encompassed with family afflictions, Mr. *Williams* on a journey wrote the following letter.]

My dear child,

I AM indeed grieved for you, and tenderly sympathize with you in the affliction our heavenly Father is again exercising you with. But how can we complain? Yes, we may complain; but let us not murmur. *It is well, and it will be well. All things work together for good, to them that love God.* Who does not see God's paternal tenderness to you in delaying this visitation so long, whilst you was less able to bear it? He is now trying you, trying your husband, trying me, and every one of us, whether we can trust in his hands, a life he hath so often made his care, a life he hath so often rescued

cued from the most imminent danger. Do, my dear, give up your child to God, whose he is, to deal with him how he pleaseth. Do it unreservedly, and not by halves. Believe it reasonable, that God should do what he will with his own. What did you mean? What was the language of your heart, when you devoted him to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in baptism, according to Christ's institution? Did you not then acknowledge God's absolute right to dispose of him, as he should see fit? And will you not abide by that surrender? This is the way to have him spared. If there be any creature we make an idol of, no wonder the Lord, if he hath a love for us, remove it out of the way, that he may have our whole heart. I say not this to reproach you; no, nor to reprove you—far from it—but to quicken you, that you may be quite absolute and unreserved in your surrender of this dear child to the Lord. *Though he should slay the child—though he should slay you—still resolve, yet will I trust in him.* I have a chearful hope the Lord will be intreated. And I would have you hope in his mercy. Assure yourself I shall not cease to pray for his life, but with all due resignation. Hath God, who fills heaven and earth, who inhabiteth eternity, made over himself to you, to be your portion, to be your God in covenant? You cannot then withhold any thing from him. Is he your God? That is enough. *He will guide you by his counsel, and afterward receive you to glory.* In the mean time, he will cause *all things to work together for your good.* To his blessing I commend you, who am your sympathizing parent,

J. W.

His

His wife's death.

DECEMBER 7, 1750. My dear wife was all the summer in a bad state of health. I took her to *Bath*, where I attended her three weeks, but her recovering some strength seemed to be remarkably owing to her journey home. At her desire, I set out on the south journey in October. "For," says she, I apprehend this will be a lingering illness, and probably I may want your company more during the journey after Christmas than this." I received several favourable letters, but she departed November 28, and the awful event was hid from me till the 5th instant, when a special messenger met me, with whom I hastened home to pay the last sad office of love. From the grave we went directly to the meeting-house, where her funeral sermon was on words of her own choosing, which she had often comfortably adopted: *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* The minister had been asking her some questions relating to the state and temper of her mind, and she let him know, "The tempter was restrained, that she had a chearful, stedfast hope in Christ, and had not a doubt." She had enjoyed a more comfortable state of mind in general the last two years, than perhaps any other two years of her life. In my journey, October 1748, she told me in one of her letters, "After you was gone,

M

"Hetty

" Hetty being married, and Sally gone to be with
 " her for a time, I seemed to myself as one forlorn,
 " bereft of all earthly friends. Upon this I was
 " very penfive ; but recollecting myself, I retired
 " to my closet, and tried if I could not find an
 " all-sufficient friend there. The Lord was pleased
 " to *lift up the light of his countenance upon me*, and
 " to afford me such sweet tokens of his presence,
 " that my soul rejoiced in the God of my salvation;
 " *I had all things and abounded. I was full*, and
 " hardly missed your company." Before that, she
 sometimes had her liftings up, and at others her
 castings down ; but from that time, I think, her
 hopes constantly prevailed. Before, she was often
 complaining to me, that although she had many
 waking hours every night, she could not get her
 mind to engage on spiritual and divine subjects.
 Afterward, it was otherwise in this respect, and
 many a morning, at my first awaking, she hath
 told me, with an air of devotion and thankfulness,
 how sweet her waking hours had been to her ; and
 hath related to me some particular passages of scrip-
 ture which had been impressed on her mind, and
 the breathings excited and drawn out thereby ; and
 sometimes she hath mentioned her particular eviden-
 ces and tokens of the divine favour. As her sick-
 ness, pains and weakness increased, so did her pa-
 tience and resignation to the will of God. Very
 remarkable was her humility and thankfulness for
 the care taken of her. When I proposed and urged
 her going to *Bath*, she thought herself not worthy
 so much cost and pains, and expressed great thank-
 fulness for every thing that was done for her. Under
 the

the discipline of the rod, she ripened apace for a better world. Her *path*, like that of the *just*, *shone more and more unto the perfect day*. But it still hangs heavy on my spirits, that I should be absent from her, when her dissolution approached. Blessed be God, who did not then hide himself from her, but gave her living comforts in her dying moments. Farewel, thou dearest partner of my heart. Lord, hasten the time, when *I shall go to her, since she shall not return to me!**



Prosperity in trade.

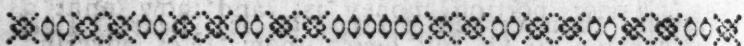
SATURDAY-night, April 13, 1751. We have had flowing prosperity in trade. Were my wife now alive, I should tell her, with an air of pleasure, if not thankfulness, as I formerly have on like occasions, of the bounty of providence to us. But what is *this*, were it ten times more than it is, to her now? She used to be very little moved, or elevated, by instances of remarkable prosperity while here. What is buying, and felling, and getting gain to her now? They are now nothing to her, nothing at all *to the spirits of just men and women made perfect*. And O how near do I stand to the verge of eternity? How soon may my soul be launched into that boundless ocean, and then what will all these things be to me? O my soul, bless and adore,

M 2

love

* This Mrs. *Phoebe Williams* was sister to Mrs. *Howseman* of *Kidderminster*, who died October 31, 1735, and whose diary was published by their brother, the Rev. Mr. *Richard Pearfall*.

love and praise the bountiful author of all thy mercies ; but *use this world*, which thou must shortly leave, *as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away*. My soul, *set thy affections on things above*, things durable, substantial and satisfactory. If my treasure be there, there let my heart be also.



The religious tradesman.

September 30, 1751. [In the following letter Mr. Williams cautions his friend to add devotion to his flourishing trade.]

Dear Sir,

I REJOICE to hear of your prosperity. I trust God is building you a house. May his candle shine on your head ! May the secret of God be upon your tabernacle ! I wish above all things that your soul may prosper and be in health. An Apostle beseeches his friends to *suffer the word of exhortation*, and I now beseech you to suffer a word of caution. I well remember when it was with me as it is now with you in some respects. I had a wife whom I dearly loved, delightful children, and a prosperous trade. These most desirable enjoyments proved a snare to me. Riches increased, and the love of riches increased as fast. I made an idol of that which should have enlarged my heart in gratitude to the bountiful giver, and by my perverseness constrained him, as it were, out of love to my soul, to deprive me of that which might otherwise have destroyed me. I had been sen-
sible

sible how inordinately *my heart went after my covetousness*, and that my spiritual interests were in a declining state; yea, I prayed against it often, and as I thought, strove against it, yet still it prevailed, till it pleased God in great mercy to cast me into deep adversity, and thereby give me a sensible conviction what a poor portion money is, and how unfit a thing for me to set my heart upon. Yet adversity itself would not have wrought so effectually upon my heart, if he had not at the same time given me a taste of his love, and by that specimen convinced me that he himself is an infinitely better portion.

—Now give me leave to ask you, at least, let me advise and persuade you to ask yourself, how do matters stand betwixt God and your soul, on the one hand, and betwixt the world and your soul, on the other? Excuse my freedom, I have nothing in view but your good. Whose interest is uppermost in your heart? What are your first thoughts in a morning, and your last thoughts at night usually fixed upon? Are your first thoughts of God? Do you consecrate the earliest hour to reading, meditation and prayer? Can you leave your bed the earlier, that you may redeem time to converse with Christ? How can you say you love him, if you suffer the world to rival him in your heart and affection; if *you cannot sometimes watch with him one hour*? Can you say with divine *Herbert*?

“ I cannot ope mine eyes

“ But thou art ready there to catch

“ My morning-soul and sacrifice:

“ Then we must needs for that day make a match.”

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Or, are you pleasing yourself early and late with thinking, how much you shall gain by this commodity, and how much by that? Just so it was with me. But if this be the case with you, expect to smart for it as I did. My dear and honoured father generally devoted the first hour and half, or sometimes two hours, to religion. And I would advise every tradesman [who fears God, who prizes communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, constantly to devote the first hour, or half hour, at least, to religious exercises. The soul must have its meals and repasts as well as the body, or it will certainly be in a languishing state. I do not much fear but you will take well this friendly caution and counsel. The love of the world is downright idolatry. We cry out against the *Jews* for selling the *Lord of glory* for money; but every covetous worldling plays the same game over again, and crucifies him afresh. But I hope *better things of you, and things that accompany salvation*. Believe me to be, with great respect, dear Sir, your cordial friend and humble servant,

J. W.

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Counsel and comfort to the afflicted.

[Mr. Williams wrote the following letter to a niece of his, whose marriage with a pious minister was awfully prevented by his sudden death.]

My dear niece,

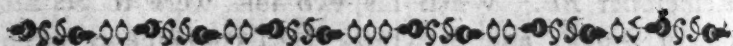
December 14, 1751.

I CANNOT express what I have felt for you. The heavy tidings greatly surprized and grieved me.

me. What then must your grief be? How deep your wound! How incurable! Do I set it a bleeding afresh? That thought adds to my grief. I would not add affliction to the afflicted. But how can it be avoided? Indeed a more pertinent question is, How can it be healed? or, at least, the smart thereof assuaged? None but the Father of spirits, the great physician, your covenant-God can do this. He can do it, and he will do it, in his own time and way. But is there nothing to be done on your part? I doubt not you have had better comforters, better advisers. I trust, before this can reach you, you have in a good measure learnt to practise the best advice I can give you. Yet let me offer my advice, which, I am very sensible, it is much easier to give than take. — Examples speak louder than words. Remember *Aaron*. When he saw two sons cut off by a sudden stroke, yet because it was the Lord's hand, *Aaron held his peace*. Remember *Eli*. When his two sons were to be cut off in a day, and in wrath, as a consequence of a divine threatening for their sins; yet, because it was the Lord, he patiently submits to the sentence. Above all, consider the *Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who, though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered*. Now in the season of your sore trial more especially, look unto *Jesus*, not only as your example, but as your helper, *who, in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted*. When it is said, *he is able*, more is implied than expressed. It certainly means, he is as willing to help, as he is able. — Many considerations

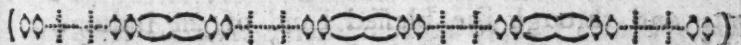
might be suggested, tending to bring your mind to entire resignation; some taken from the unerring providence of God; others, from his unchangeable decrees. I might point out a variety of circumstances, which, had they been permitted, would have greatly aggravated the stroke. I might instance to you trials far more grievous, which others have borne, and are now bearing. But the best advice I can recommend, as the nearest and surest way to comfort, is, as I before said, to *look unto Jesus*. Through him *direct your prayer, and look up. Trust in him with all your heart*. Cast yourself upon his all-sufficiency. Plead your relation to a covenant-God in Christ, and in effect say, "I am thine, " Lord save me. I am thine, Lord, support and " comfort me. I am thine, Lord, sanctify this awful " stroke." Heaven is witness to my earnest cries for you, and tender sympathy with you. Your's, &c.

J. W.

*His second marriage.*

JANUARY 25, 1752. Four months ago I was observing, that my children are all married, and through the blessed hand of an indulgent providence, well provided for; that through the divine bounty and goodness, I enjoy easy circumstances, and flowing prosperity, without much worldly incumbrance; that my health seems firm, nor do my spirits flag, or fail of their wonted alacrity; and that a suitable companion seems more desirable to me,

me, than a single state. I *then* wanted to know what the mind of the Lord is, willing either to continue a widower, or to marry again, *only in the Lord*, which he shall please to choose for me. *Now* the Lord hath carried me through a wonderful and delightful scene, which I would not quickly forget. He hath given me a most agreeable wife, for which I desire daily to bless his name. O may we be mutual helpers of each other's holiness, faith, hope, love and joy in the Lord! I was, as I thought, at a point whether to marry again or not; and resigned to the divine will; but importunate in prayer, that if I were to marry again, God would give me one of his dear children, and he hath indeed granted my request. Blessed be his name, whose providence so nicely adjusted every circumstance of my journey to *Biddeford*, inclining me to go at the instigation of my daughter, when I had laid aside the thought of going. Blessed be his name, who so exactly marked out all my steps, and made my way plain and prosperous, inclined her heart towards me, and formed her every way suitable to my temper and wishes. *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits*, and for this instance of his bounty in particular?



Sacramental meditation.

SATURDAY-night, April 4, 1752. *Do this*, says our Lord, *in remembrance of me*. What am I to do? I am to eat bread and drink wine,
M 5 believing

believing these, when set apart from a common to this peculiar use, to represent the body and blood of Christ. Infidels may laugh at this part of our holy religion; but lovers of Christ, and believers in him, make great account of it. Certainly our Lord had a wise and kind design in the instituting of it. O that I could see into his heart, and not mistake his design! Come, blessed and most adorable Jesus, thou who hast endured the greatest, the vilest indignities and cruelties for the sake of sinful men, and voluntarily submitted to the most painful and ignominious death of the cross, in order to atone for sin, shew me, wherefore thou hast instituted these sacred memorials of thyself, and what share, what interest I have therein, and what thou requirest of me. — I am to do this in remembrance of my Lord. I am to remember, that *the Son of God, the Lord of glory, who is in the bosom of the Father, was made flesh, or assumed the body prepared for him.* O the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich! Though in the form of God, and though he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. But forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself, who was to redeem them, likewise took part of the same. For how could he have borne our sins on the tree, if he had not had a body? Or how could he have vanquished him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, but by dying and rising again from the dead, as the first-fruits of them that sleep in death? I am to remember, that in this body

he

he bore the wrath of God due to us for sin. O what horror and agony did his soul endure at Gethsemane! He endured the utmost contempt from those he came to save, with all the torture which their hatred, spite and rage could inflict upon him. He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting. O the compassion and condescension of Jesus! But what is all this to me? Yes, he was wounded for my transgressions, he was bruised for my iniquities, he bore my sins in his own body on the tree, that by his stripes I might be healed, and by his death I might live.

The importance of the christian ministry.

April 15, 1752. [To a minister, Mr. Williams wrote the following letter.]

Dear Sir,

I AM glad you are filled with such a sense of the vast importance of the work of a minister. I confess, to me it appears the highest and most honourable, the hardest and most laborious, and at the same time the most awful and important office that is borne by any man upon earth. If a Senator of Rome would not have matched his daughter with a King, no doubt he esteemed himself greater than that King. And is not an ambassador from the King of Kings greater than he? To protect and defend the lives and liberties of a whole kingdom,

or empire, is certainly a very high and honourable office ; but to be God's instrument in saving immortal souls is far higher and more honourable. To be invested with a commission from heaven, must be the highest investiture. To preach the gospel, is an honour never put upon angels. If ministers are indeed ambassadors for Christ, if they serve Christ, God will honour them, and men will honour them, *and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake* ; but if they do not faithfully deliver their embassy, notwithstanding their high station in the church, they *will be lightly esteemed*. — Certainly every wise and faithful minister, who understands his office, and *fulfils his ministry*, finds it to be a great as well as a good work. If he discharges the secret duties of the closet and the study, and the private duties with his family and with his people, and the publick duties of the pulpit ; if he *be instant in season, out of season* ; no doubt he hath work enough for every waking hour. — And what in the world can be a more awful or important work, than that, upon the success or unsuccessfulness of which depends the eternal salvation or damnation of precious souls ? “ The eternal salvation of one soul” (according to Dr. Doudridge's striking reflection) “ is
“ of greater importance than the temporal salvation
“ of a whole kingdom or empire for ten thousand
“ ages, or indeed any given duration of time. Be-
“ cause there will come up a point in eternity, when
“ that one soul will have existed as many ages as
“ all the individuals in a kingdom, ranged in close
“ succession, will all together have existed at that
“ given period. Therefore one soul is capable of
“ a larger

"a larger share of happiness or misery to an end-
"less eternity, than all the inhabitants of a whole
"kingdom are capable of in ten thousand ages."
How just is this remark! How agreeable to our ne-
cessary notion of eternity! And what an affecting
idea does it give us of the importance of salvation!
Well might the Apostle call it *so great salvation*.
If the salvation of those who hear the gospel be
possible, how should every minister, and indeed how
should every one *who is saved and called with a holy
calling*, bestir themselves, and use their utmost en-
deavours, agreeably to their several stations, if by
any means they might save some? Surely we may
learn this from our Lord's saying, *It shall be more
tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judg-
ment, than for those who repented not under his own
ministry.* I am, &c. J. W.



An afflictive accident improved.

JULY 4, 1752. I would now review a sore dis-
after, which a wise and gracious providence ap-
pointed unto me. O that I might do it with a
suitable temper of mind! On Lord's-day evening,
May 17, when my partner in trade had been gone
but two days before on a six weeks journey, coming
from meeting, I fell, and gave my ankle a terrible
strain, felt exquisite pain, and was quite disabled
from rising. I had much pain many days and nights.
The part is now weak, and possibly may never re-
cover former strength. Certainly this providence hath
a voice,

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a voice, and it is the voice of God. *[Who would not listen, when God speaks, and be solicitous to understand him? He calls to consideration. In the day of adversity, consider. He calls to humiliation and sorrow for sin. Jeremiah complains of God's ancient people, Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction. Is not this word the word of the Lord, to me, at least by way of caution and counsel, that I may not harden my heart, after the same example of unbelief? I am therefore called to serious, close examination, whether I have grieved, when I was stricken, and whether I have received, or refused to receive, correction? Have I laid to heart this chastisement? Have I received it as from the hand of God? Have I humbly enquired his will, what is the Lord's voice herein, what is the meaning of this rebuke? Have I been humbled under a sense of what I apprehend to be the procuring cause? Have I been so humbled, as to mortify my pride and vain glory? Hath it excited my thankfulness for preservation in long and various journies? Hath it animated my faith in his power and care, and to pray for constant preservation? Lord, help me to improve it as I ought. Shew me more and more thy kind designs, thy designs of grace in this humbling providence. Is it not especially that I may partake of thy holiness? Yes, this is the Lord's primary design, in all his messages of grace, and in all the rebukes of his rod. My soul's happiness is bound up in my love and likeness to God. God would have me happy, and therefore holy. By nature I am unholy, and alas! by practice*

tice too. O what a precious treasure is the word of God, which holds forth our recovery, as well as our ruin? Do mankind know that such a treasure lies in the Bible? Then certainly they will make it their study night and day. No, they will not. Though they know it contains the mind and will of God, both for their faith and practice, yet very few will be at the pains to study it. Why will not mankind, who are reasonable creatures, and know they are dying creatures, attend diligently to those things which are of everlasting importance? It is owing to their unbelief. It is one thing to have a notional, and another to have a practical belief. *It is appointed unto men once to die.* Who questions the truth of this? Yet how few suffer this word of God to have its due weight upon their own conscience? Did men really believe it, would they neglect any means in their power to obtain the favour of their Judge, that when they are judged, they may be acquitted? How rarely hath it been known, that persons imprisoned for capital offences neglect any means in their power, that they might be acquitted, when brought to their trial? The reason is, they believe the assize will come, and that they are to be acquitted or punished according to their final sentence. What reason can be assigned, why men generally neglect the means of preparation for death and eternity? Certainly they have not a practical, heart-affecting belief, that they shall die, and that their death may be near. When they think at all about it, they have no doubt of its reality, but they look not upon it as near, nor do they suffer their thoughts to dwell upon the subject. As Dr. Young says,

“ ——— Man

“ ——— Man thinks himself immortal.

“ All men think all men mortal but themselves.”

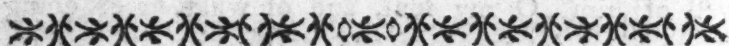
They *put the evil day far away*. It pleaseth God therefore sometimes, in great mercy, to take his rod in hand, and by sickness, pain, or adversity to bring men to serious consideration. Some are quickened by the rod, others are more hardened. But certainly it is a great aggravation of guilt, not to grieve when God strikes; nor when he consumes, to receive correction. Grieve, for what? Not merely because the Lord hath stricken, or because they are afflicted. He expects them to grieve for that which hath been the procuring cause of their chastisement; and not only for sin in general, but for that particular iniquity, which he would by this affliction bring to their remembrance. When this is discovered, it must be grieved for, repented of, and put away. He expects us to *put away the evil of our doings from before his eyes, to cease to do evil, and learn to do well*. Now, O my soul, the Lord hath stricken me. Have I grieved? It was certainly his hand that caused my foot to slide. Otherwise one of my strength and activity might have walked safe enough. He hath not indeed consumed me, but he hath in part consumed my strength. Have I received correction? Mr. *Whately* observes, “ We may read our sin in “ our punishment.” Few men, of my age, walk with so much ease, vigour and activity. Hath not this been fewel to my pride? It is fit I should be taught by sensible, smarting experience, to acknowledge the hand which alone gives strength, and can insure safety. If he gave it, who hates pride, he

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gave it me not, to value myself upon it. Be grieved and humbled, O my soul, for every motion of pride. Lie humbled and abased at his feet, and let the Lord alone be exalted. If he hath given strength and vigour, he hath also shewed, how easily he can turn strength into weakness, vigour into languor. O let me be quickened in future to employ all my strength, vigour and vivacity to his praise. Think well of him, O my soul, and of what he is doing to me, and let me love and praise him for this rebuke. When God says, *Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone*; or when he says, *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more*; how sad is the case of such a people, or person? O my soul, bless the Lord, who does not count me unworthy of correction. Let it be my solicitous care, to turn to him that smites me. Let this affliction, pain and weakness, warn me of that time (who knows how soon?) when I must conflict with heavier afflictions, heart-sinking pressures, and overwhelming pain. Let this confinement to my house and chamber forewarn me of a longer, closer one. I know, O Lord, that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. Let my heart and soul say to the grave, Thou art my body's long home; To corruption, thou art my father; To the worm, thou art my mother, and my sister. E'er long, not one foot, one ankle, one leg only shall be maimed and disabled, but every limb, every joint shall stiffen in death, and every active power of my body be incapable of any action or motion at all. This goodly animal frame, which hath served so many useful purposes, shall not only be altogether useless and unprofitable,

unprofitable, but loathsome and ghastly, a spectacle of aversion and horror. My dearest friends, my children, and the wife of my bosom, when they have viewed it, will turn away from such an unsightly lump, and desire it may be *buried out of their sight*. Then shall I be entirely *cut off from the land of the living*.



Sanctified afflictions.

March 5, 1753. [To a much afflicted daughter, Mr. Williams wrote on a journey.]

My dear child,

I HEAR no harm of you; nay, I hear what is very good; for a friend of your's, and much more of mine, tells me, that you are much better. This implies, that you have been much worse; and this I cannot hear without some feeling of your griefs, though past. The Psalmist says, *As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*. It implies, that he who hath the heart of a father, cannot but pity his child under affliction. I can truly say, since I have been a father, I have never wanted a tender concern for mine, nor for yourself in particular.—Nor is my pity for you unattended with an earnest concern, that your afflictions may be productive of the choicest mercies. An approved author says, “Sanctified afflictions are “heavenly promotions.” You have had a large share of bodily afflictions. Have they been sancti-
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fied to you, so as to increase your *humiliation under the mighty hand of God*? Have they been the means, by which you have been more *crucified to the world, and the world to you*? Have they made you pray more and better, with greater enlargement, and with more intire resignation to the divine will? These are some of God's gracious ends in afflicting his children; and these, I trust, have been answered in some considerable degree, by the many great trials, though chiefly of a different kind, which his wise and gracious providence, from time to time, hath seen meet to exercise me with. Often have I had just occasion to sing, with Mr. *Mason*,

“ ————— O happy rod,
“ That brought me nearer to my God!”

—Be not over and above solicitous for health and ease. But you cannot be too solicitous for a sanctified use and improvement of afflictions. *Blessed is the man, whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teacheest him out of thy law.* The blessedness does not flow merely from chastening, but from the chastening as connected with the teaching. Under our chastenings therefore, may we never fail to search and enquire diligently, nor ever forget to pray that God would *shew us, wherefore he contendeth with us.* My prayers shall be for you, as well for the recovery of your health, as the sanctifying of your afflictions. Cease not to pray for yourself, your husband, your children, and likewise for your affectionate father,

J. W.

Sacramental



Sacramental meditation.

LORD's-day, July 8, 1753. O my soul, this is the last sabbath in which I am to join in public worship in our old meeting-house; to-morrow being the day fixed on for beginning to take it down, in order to its being rebuilt on additional ground. This therefore is the last season, I am to have, of renewing my covenant with God, in the place where I have done it, in the space of forty two years, near five hundred times. Will this be my last covenanting season in the old meeting-house? And how do I know it will not be my last upon earth, the last before the *house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved*? Dissolved it must be. *It is appointed unto me once to die.* I am now an old man, and if I were not, I am a mortal man. Blessed be God for a glorious hope of a blissful immortality beyond the grave. O for the quickening, humbling, chearing influences of his good Spirit at this time, that whilst I am sealing my covenant with the Lord, he may also seal his covenant with me, and to me! May I be all reverence and fear in his presence, all love and thankfulness to Jesus! O that in this last gospel-feast in the old house, I may have a foretaste of that wine which is ever *new in our Father's kingdom*! And may this be a day, and this a season, much to be remembered in future time, and through a joyful eternity! So be it, Amen, come Lord Jesus!—[The same evening I

add]

add] Blessed be God, the God of ordinances, this shall not, I trust, be reckoned among my lost sabbaths. He that *was known of the brethren at Emmaus*, made known himself also to me *in the breaking of bread*. Or ever I was aware I was *as the chariots of Amminadib*. Rejoice, O my soul, *in the Lord always*.

Self examination.

SATURDAY-evening, December 1, 1753. Come, O my soul, and submit to examination. Strictly survey thy heart and thy ways. Speak, conscience; and speak impartially. I shall be judged at another rate, by him whose *eyes are as a flame of fire*, who *searcheth the reins and the hearts* of all. Nevertheless, *if my heart condemn me not*, if mine be a duly enlightened conscience, I may have boldness towards God. Yea, I know he does not condemn me, for my conscience does not condemn me. I do not love him as I ought, yet *he, that knoweth all things*, does surely know that I love him: yea, that I love him supremely, more than I love any thing else in the world. There is no creature upon earth I love as I do my wife. Yet surely I love Christ more than my wife, and love him the more for making her so suitable and agreeable to me, and so studious to please me in all things, and to please and oblige every one of my children. I love my children, and rejoice in all their prosperity. But what is my wife, or what are my children to me, compared

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compared with him, who hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood? He hath given me great worldly prosperity, and is still making it to grow; yet, through the riches of his grace, though earthly riches increase, hitherto I have not set my heart upon them. I would rather live a life of communion with God, in utter poverty, than enjoy the greatest fulness of outward prosperity without it. I would rather know, that God is my portion, and hath loved me with everlasting love, that Christ is my beloved, and I am his, than have all this earth to be mine, without such knowledge. I would rather endure abject poverty, and together therewith, scorn, reproach, contempt, and persecution, yea, to be hated of all men for the sake of Christ, than be the greatest and most honourable man upon earth, without good evidences of the love of God. Certainly I rejoice in prosperity, but I rejoice in it as the gift of God, and as a means whereby I am rendered more capable of supporting his interest and promoting his glory, to which I am daily devoting all I have, and all I am. I thought it my duty to give 150l. towards building a house for God. But I am amazed at the profusion of the divine bounty, since I did that. I am fully persuaded the Lord hath given me more since that subscription, than I ever gained by trading before in the same number of months. This experience hath confirmed my resolution to contribute, according to my ability, whatever his cause may want. I bless God, the heaping up of wealth is nothing in my esteem. The doing of good works, whereby God may be glorified, and my neighbour

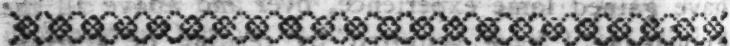
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neighbour edified, so far as I know my own heart, is a thousand times more to me, than to have it said, when I am dead, He died worth so much. —I love my life. Every man loves his life. It is a principle implanted and rooted in our nature. I must cease to be a man, before I can cease to love my life. *The father of lies* spoke a great truth, when he said, *Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life.* I can die but once, and that trial is not yet come. Am I willing to die, if God should call me hence? Could I cheerfully part with life, and all its comforts, now that I enjoy such a fulness of prosperity, and a vigorous constitution beyond most of my years; for the sake of enjoyments that are out of sight, and can only be viewed by the eye of faith? Indeed it is hard to say, how I shall bear such a trial, before it comes. But as I have often *rejoiced in hope of the glory of God*, and as I have no present doubt of the pardon of my sins, or of my interest in the blood of Christ, so the thoughts of death, at present, wear no terror. *I would not live always.* Methinks *I have* rather a desire, when God hath wrought all his work in me, for me, and by me, *to depart and to be with Christ, which I firmly believe to be far better.* Even so, Amen, come Lord Jesus.

Thanks at the close of the year.

MONDAY-night, December 31, 1753. A bountiful and indulgent providence hath just brought me to the close of this year. O what a year

year of mercies hath this been to me? What enjoyments am I blessed with, both of a temporal, and spiritual nature? Health of body, peace of mind, flowing prosperity, a most agreeable, dutiful, loving wife, a suitable partner in trade, with whom I have gone on hitherto in perfect harmony, many other agreeable relations and friends, plenty of gospel-ordinances both publick and private, hope in God, in his word, his promises and covenant, hope of the glory of God, and sometimes the light of his countenance shining in upon my soul. These are some of the mercies I have to reflect upon, and the enjoyments I have been favoured with in the last year. These have not been common to all, nor to all the dear children of God, many of whom have been sick and weak, or poor and indigent, or been sorely perplexed in their affairs and worldly circumstances, and many who have walked closely with God, have nevertheless *walked in darkness, and seen no light* of God's countenance. O may I abound in thankfulness, and thanksgiving, and always lie humble at the feet of the Lord Jesus.



The duties of a husband.

[To the gentleman, who married Mr. Williams's niece (mentioned December 14, 1751) he wrote the following letter.

Dear Sir, January 17, 1754.

SINCE it hath pleased an all-wise God, who guides with an unerring hand all the mighty wheels

wheels of nature, providence and grace, to bring you into a near affinity to me, as I have often congratulated myself on that account, and have often offered up my most ardent supplications for you and your spouse, that you may be indeed mutually *helps-meet*, and always dear to each other, and that all the blessings of the everlasting covenant in constant streams may flow down upon you both, so now I congratulate you, Sir, upon this happy union, which is, I doubt not, an union not only of persons but of hearts. — Since you have enjoyed great advantages, particularly under the ministry of the late worthy Mr. ———, as well as of your present pastor, it may seem the less necessary for me to offer any thing by way of advice. Nevertheless, as the duties of this new relation you are so lately entered into, are many of them of a very tender and delicate nature, and seldom touched upon, much less fully handled in the pulpit; as God hath so twisted our duty and happiness together, that the latter is inseparable from the former; and as by more than thirty years cohabitation with my former and my present wife, you may suppose I have gained some experience, over and above all the knowledge I have acquired by reading or hearing, you will perhaps be pleased, at least will take it in good part, if I freely offer a few hints. — You will certainly find, Sir, that all your conjugal happiness is bound up in love; that there is a possibility of bursting the bands of the most endeared conjugal love, at least for a time; that there is a possibility also of preserving these bands inviolate; and therefore means must be used to preserve them. All our
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happiness both for time and eternity consists in love, and is inseparable from it. Love to God in perfection, together with the full communications of his love, is the heaven of heaven. And the more our hearts are going out in love to God and Christ in meditation, prayer and praise, whilst here, and the more we are favoured with the tokens of his peculiar love, the more we enjoy of heaven upon earth. And as to outward enjoyments, what happiness can we derive from meat or drink, that we do not relish? Or from employments, diversions, or company, that we do not love? Nor is it, I think, so much my wife's love to me, as mine to her, that tends to my conjugal happiness; at the same time that I must allow, there is a necessity of both to compleat my happiness. No doubt, if her love to me should fail, mine to her would also languish. But certainly it is my love to her that I feel; though a sense of her's to me enhances my relish of it. And the way to perpetuate my relish, is, never to let my love to her cool, nor to entertain an unkind thought of her. — It is possible this may be the case, at least for a time; nay, give me leave to say, there is danger of it. It hath been the case in many good families, and may in your's. The more you are apprized of the danger, Sir, and the more you dread it, you will be the more upon your guard against it. You have a will of your own, and so hath your wife. These may not always be the same in all things. What will you do, Sir, when such a case happens? I assure you, I would have you always keep your place. The husband is *head* of the wife, and it is her duty to yield. But what if she will

will not? Or what if she cannot immediately do it? Must I fly in a passion, and violently bear down all before me, because I am the stronger of the two? Is that the way to cherish love? As God hath appointed me to rule my house, so he expects me to rule it with meekness of wisdom, and to behave as one that is worthy to rule. Love is founded on esteem. But, by flying in a passion, I shew my weakness, which will neither raise me in her esteem, nor tend to preserve her love to me inviolate.— Yet, I persuade myself, there is a possibility of preserving conjugal love inviolate. It hath been preserved by many husbands and wives, who have never suffered any thing to interrupt it. They are generally small matters about which married people differ. Therefore a moderate degree of thoughtfulness might easily prevent their differences. There is so much pleasure, sweetness, and serenity of mind attending the constant exercise of love, and so much pain, bitterness, and disquietude attending strife and discord betwixt such near relations, that the consideration thereof cannot fail to dispose prudent persons, and more especially such as fear God, to the exercise of much self-denial, patience, and forbearance, yea, to much watchfulness and prayer, in order to secure the former, and avoid the latter.— These, and such as these, I take to be the principal means of cherishing love, and without which love can scarcely be maintained in a flourishing state. To which give me leave, Sir, to add a few more hints. I would advise, that you be always as cautious of saying or doing any thing to displease your wife, as you was before marriage. Especially if you see her

ruffled by the ill behaviour of servants, which, I am afraid, will sometimes happen, or if by any other accident, then is the time to be more than ordinarily upon your guard, that you say nothing which would add to her vexation. So likewise, if your own mind is at any time ruffled by the carelessness or frowardness of servants, be more than ordinarily careful that your wife may feel no share of your resentment. Even then let a sight of her dispose you to meekness and love. Indeed, the more you frame yourself to be habitually mild and sweet to all, the less liable you will be to have your temper ruffled by sudden incidents. — Above all, keep up the worship of God in your family, and in your closet. Let nothing interrupt your daily course of devotion. To that end, make it a rule never to stay late from home, especially if your wife be not with you. Let her company be always dearer to you, than any other company. I doubt not you will call some praying friends together, as soon as you conveniently can, after you are settled in your own house, solemnly to recommend you both to the divine blessing. If you will give me timely notice, I shall endeavour to *throw my mite into the treasury*, which may on that occasion be laid up for you in heaven. That you may *seek and find the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*, and that *all other things may be added unto you*, are the cordial wishes of, dear Sir, your, &c. J. W.

The duties of a wife.

[To his niece, on her marriage, Mr. Williams wrote the following letter. See the articles dated December 14, 1751, and January 17, 1754.]

Dear cousin, January 18, 1754.

THE Lord hath done great things for you, whereof you are glad. I heartily congratulate you, for indeed I am glad also. Perhaps you, and I, and mine, are now inheriting the prayers of your good grandfather Williams. And without all peradventure, you are inheriting the promises. Exceeding great and precious are the promises made to the seed of the righteous: Such, I am persuaded, your parents were: and particularly the promise made to those, who seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. This promise, I trust, is your's, and abundantly fulfilled in you.—The judgments of God are a great deep. How little did you, or any of your friends, understand his awful dispensation in removing the Rev. Mr. ———! Now you understand a little more of it. How graciously hath he filled your mouth with laughter, and your tongue with singing! He hath turned your mourning into joy, he hath comforted you, and made you rejoice from your sorrow! Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. But while you consider the Psalmist's exhortation as belonging to you, let me caution you

to rejoice only in the Lord. — My dear cousin, you are now as *a city that is set on a hill*. Many eyes are upon you, and be sure of this, many will *watch for your halting*. Expect envy to *shoot her arrows, even bitter words*, and every little mistake in your conduct to be magnified into a crime, and some of your most innocent expressions to be perverted into, or interpreted to mean, what is most offensive. It will be your wisdom, therefore, not to place too much of your happiness in the commendation of fellow-mortals; then will you be the less sensible of their reproaches. They are memorable lines in *Addison's Cato*,

“ ’Tis not in mortals to command success;

“ But we'll do more, *Sempronius*, we'll deserve it.”

Think it enough to have deserved commendation, though you go without it. *Solomon* says, *A good man shall be satisfied from himself*. So shall a good woman. Draw your highest happiness from a conscious sense of the divine approbation. Labour to *commend yourself to every one's conscience in the sight of God*; but if that cannot be done, rest satisfied, that God will, in his own time, *bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon-day*. — By all means always keep on good terms with your husband. *Submit yourself to him, as unto the Lord*. It is the duty of every wife: It is doubly your's. It had been your duty, had your fortune been ten times superior to his. You are now bound to it by the additional ties of gratitude. Never dispute any point with him, nor go beyond a mild and gentle persuasion. It is no less your interest than

than duty to please him. It is the only way to secure his love, and the surest way to have your own will. Whilst he sees you make it your study to please him, he never will think he can do too much to please you. Please him therefore in reason, and out of reason. — Every man hath his foibles, and I have mine. We are apt to run into some or other little indulgences, or gratifications, customs, modes, and forms, which are not always so pleasing to our wives, as to ourselves. No doubt, you will find Mr. ——— possessed of some of these, and tenacious of them. In such a case be sure never to thwart him. If any thing should appear imprudent in his conduct, you will think of some gentle method to give him a view of it. But in whatever is perfectly innocent, never give him the least uneasiness, nor so much as wish he would refrain from it. — I wish I could persuade you to pray with him sometimes, in your turn, as well as he with you. I know nothing you can do, which hath a more direct tendency to cherish and maintain conjugal love. Some other hints I might have added, but you need them not. What I have said, I must intreat you to believe, proceeds not from any suspicion that you will behave otherwise, but from the abundant love of, dear cousin, your truly affectionate uncle, &c.

J. W.

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Longing desires after God.

SATURDAY-night, March 9, 1754. Welcome the approaching sabbath! Come, O come, thou

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Lord of the sabbath, and take possession of a heart, which gladly empties itself of every care, of every vanity, to make room for such a glorious guest, for such a gracious Lord! What a day of cares and cumber hath this been? What days and weeks of hurry and business have I had? Thou knowest, Lord, this is not what my soul chooses. Thou knowest I do not love the world, nor the things of the world, but thou hast made it my duty for a season to be conversant in them, and busied, and I must submit. Other employment suits my inclination better, and is far more delightful, more profitable. This soul of mine was never made for earth and earthly things; she can neither feed upon its dainties, nor wear its *thick clay*. I find nothing here below that suits my large desires, nothing that can fill them. Lord, nothing can do this, but a *sense of thy love*. It is not enough that thou lovest me, but I must know it, and be able to say with *Paul*, that *Jesus Christ loved me, and gave himself for me*. Thou knowest, Lord, how I longed to have done with the world, before I could empty my hands of it this evening, that so I might come to thee. *My soul thirsted for thee*, and was in pain. *My heart panted after thee, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks*. I would not have any company so dear to me as thine, or any conversation so delightful to me as communion with thy blessed self. One smile of thine is better to me than thousands of gold and silver, ten thousand times dearer to me than the smiles of any mortal, even of the wife of my bosom. She is not my God, is not my soul's felicity.

felicity. She hath my heart, indeed, but only in subordination to thee. I trust I can say,

“Jesus hath all my powers possest,

“My hopes, my fears, my joys;

“He, the dear sovereign of my breast,

“Shall still command my voice.”

I desire to be wholly thine, and to look upon all I have as thine. I am not a proprietor, and I desire to be no proprietor of any thing below the sun, no, not of so much as myself. *I am not my own, for I am bought with a price.* O what a price!

“ Though curious to compute,

“Archangels fail’d to cast the mighty sum,

“It’s value, vast, ungrasp’d by finite minds,

“For ever hides and glows in the Supreme.”

Thou hast given me riches, but they are not mine. Thou hast intrusted me with much, but to thee I am accountable for all. I have consecrated, and am daily consecrating, my all to thee, whose they are. *Though riches increase, let me not set my heart upon them,* and I trust, through grace, I do not. Let me *be rich in good works.* Let me never withhold from thee, whatever thou requirest of me. Let me believe thy word, and rely upon thy faithfulness. *Of thine own, let me be always ready to give unto thee, not grudgingly, but chearfully, for thou lovest a chearful giver.* And whatever I give to thy church, or thy poor, let me give to thee, let me *do it as unto the Lord.* Thou hast a right to take away the riches thou hast entrusted me with, and by a turn of thy hand thou canst do it. How

easily canst thou turn my flowing prosperity into deep adversity? And how know I, whether thou wilt not do it? O my soul, how could I bear such a trial as this? What if the Lord should, for the trial of my faith, and to get himself glory, see meet to reduce me to poverty, to disgrace, to want, or shut me up in a prison? Could I eye his hand therein, and justify him in all? Could I think such ways of the Lord to be mercy and truth to me? Could I humble myself under his mighty hand? Could I bless the name of the Lord, when he takes away, as well as when he gave? Could I enjoy adversity, and myself therein, because it is the Lord, and because his will is done? Could I tread the world beneath my feet, and take joyfully the loss of all things, knowing that I have in heaven a better and more enduring substance? Could I think it enough to be rich towards God, and set myself the more to seek his presence, to cultivate his favour, to live a life of devout meditation and communion with God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God? No. I can do none of these things; yet I can do them all through Christ strengthening me. Let me but hear him say, *As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.* Let him but shed abroad his love in my heart by the Holy Ghost, and by his witness seal my adoption; then, in whatever state, my soul shall magnify the Lord, and my spirit shall rejoice in God my Saviour. But without him I can do nothing.



Parental anxiety for departed infants.

MARCH 18, 1754. I took a walk in the twilight of this evening in the church-yard, to converse with the dead. As I was walking and musing, I observed a poor man, who formerly had been one of my servants, with his eyes fixed upon four short graves, all in a row, near to my walk. When I came up to him, he desired to ask me a question. His question was this, Whether I thought the children of wicked parents, dying in their infancy, suffered for the wickedness of their parents? In answer to which I only told him, that the scripture says, *The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.* From whence it appears, that the piety of parents is some way of advantage to their children. Immediately I pursued my walk. But when I came back to the place, he stopped me again, and told me, he had four children lay buried there, and with an air of deep concern repeated the former question, applying it to himself and his children, owning that he looked upon himself as a very wicked man, and was distressed with fears lest they should fare the worse for his wickedness. I told him, that we know very little of the state of infants dying in infancy, since the scripture is almost silent on that head; and asked him, Why he was not rather concerned about the salvation of his own

soul, since the scripture expressly says, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die? Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* I plied him with many more texts of the same import, and again pursued my walk. He then left the place, and when in my third walk I had passed briskly by him, I heard him running hastily after me. I therefore stopped, whilst he told me how often he had come up to look at the graves of his children, and the distressing fears he had for them, acknowledging freely that he had been much addicted to drunkenness, and too often had been guilty of swearing; but except these, he had not been chargeable with any gross immorality. I then laboured to convince him, how poor a pretence it was, that he had not wronged any one, when he had withheld from God his Maker what was his due in numberless instances, some of which I enumerated to him, and gave him the best advice I could, and then again was pursuing my walk. At parting he said, he was ashamed to presume to walk along with me, and indeed I was not very willing to be interrupted, and so I walked alone to the farther end of the church-yard; but had many relenting thoughts toward the poor man. However, I passed by him again, and again he ran hastily after me. I then stopped, and talked to him a while; but it was too cold to stand still, so I encouraged him to walk with

with me. Several times he wept, or seemed to weep. We walked and talked together, till it began to be dark. He accompanied me to my own door, and then seemed loth to part with me; so I took him in, and led him up to my chamber, where I made him sit down, and asked him many close questions, to which he replied in a penitential strain. I encouraged, cautioned, warned, instructed, and exhorted him, and at his request prayed with him, inviting him to come to me again. He went away very thankful, and seemingly penitent. Yet I cannot but fear he will return to his drunken companions, which he owns have heretofore extinguished many good impressions and inclinations. And yet, who knows? I have the satisfaction however of having used, and of purposing farther to use, my poor, feeble endeavours to recover and *save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.* Help me, help me, O my God,



The faithful christian minister.

March 18, 1754. [To the Rev. Mr. Darracott.]

Dear Sir,

IN reading your's, I cannot but observe, what a pleasure it is to feel symptoms of approaching death, and yet also a glimpse of glory. Who would not have endured your fainting sweats, for the sake of having, at the same time, the bosom of Jesus to lean upon, and *the love of God to be shed abroad*

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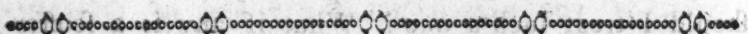
W. W.

in our heart? I congratulate you, my dear friend, upon such a rich and renewed experience of the certainty of your title to mansions in the skies, and such a pledge of the presence of your shepherd with you, when you shall indeed pass *through the valley of the shadow of death*. I congratulate you upon the comfortable prospect your spiritual spouse, a *church of the living God*, affords you. I consider under-shepherds as bridegrooms to their particular churches. I therefore think, such should be very solicitous to discharge well the extensive duties of a good husband, and parent. You do right in making personal addresses to each of your flock, and praying with each. I wonder not that you have always found such work attended with great pleasure, which it could hardly be without some success. I wonder how any spiritual father can content himself in the neglect of it, if he hath ability and opportunity. How can he be a good husband, who does not love his spouse? And how can he love her, if he does not love her children? And how does he sufficiently shew his love to those children, with whom he never converses, or into whose state he never enquires? What an awful view does this give of the work of Christ's ministers?—I heard a most excellent sermon at ——— from the Rev. Mr. ———, and now I will tell you somewhat I had from him in conversation. The first time he was to preach as one of the Prebends; he was well apprized that among his hearers would be the Bishop and several Doctors. He found carnal self began to plead for moderation, at the same time that the new man earnestly pleaded for zeal. The former cried,

“ What

“What occasion have you to run the risque of displeasing these great men, and making them your enemies? You may preach so, as not to contradict the gospel, nor their tenets, and why should you not become all things to all men? Give them a moral discourse, and it will suffice. But if you advance the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, you will make yourself the object of their displeasure, perhaps of their contempt and ridicule. You know not what the consequence may be.” The latter pleaded thus. “Away with these slavish fears of man. One is your master, even Christ. If you yet please men, how are you the servant of Christ? Will you dare to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Will not he then be ashamed of you, when his favour and applause will be more to you than all the world? Do not consult with flesh and blood. Preach now, as if you were sure this will be the last sermon you ever shall preach. How do you know but some one precious soul, at least, may be awakened to cry out, What must I do to be saved? Wo is unto you, if you preach not the gospel of Christ.” To this, carnal self again replied, and the new man rejoined. The dispute lasted many days, and each of the contending parties provided itself with a sermon, nor was he determined, when going to preach, which of them had the ascendancy. He took both sermons with him into the pulpit, and there was earnest with God to direct him. He hoped, that his prayer was heard and answered, because he felt an undaunted courage and resolution; so that after his publick prayer he was enabled to speak boldly

boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. When he was drawing near the conclusion, a woman not far from the pulpit cried out, "I cannot bear it—I cannot bear it."—He was at a loss, at present, what could be the meaning of such a cry; for he was not thundering out the terrors of the law, but blowing the silver trumpet of the gospel, and displaying the blessedness of those who win Christ, and are found in him. He afterwards understood, that the woman had been labouring and heavy laden, and had then found rest in Christ, but that the overflowing of her joy in the Lord had extorted from her that outcry. On the whole, he was resolved to persevere in such a strain of preaching. He also added, that having, in that instance, obtained the victory over the slavish fear of man, the same divine grace enabled him to maintain it ever since.—How little reason have those *who trust in the Lord, to be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass?* I am, your's, J. W.



Doubtful ways committed to God.

LORD's-day morning, March 24, 1754. Hail sacred morning! O that my life were one eternal sabbath! I trust it will be so ere long. But what I am to do, and what I am to bear, in the mean time, God only knows. And well he knows; for nothing shall befall me, but what is of his special ordering and appointing. This thought satisfies me

me as to all future events and contingencies. *A sparrow falls not to the ground without him. He numbers the hairs of my head.* How securely may I trust myself in his hands, whilst I keep in his way? How solicitous should I be to keep in his way, and not like *Jonah*, desert the way prescribed for me? Shall I keep in his way in the journey I have before me? Have I his call to undertake it? I trust I have. He knows what temptations I shall be exposed to, and how to deliver me out of them. May his glory be uppermost in my heart, my aims, and my endeavours all the way! Lord, give me wisdom, give me courage, give me from time to time what I shall speak. Let me speak for thee. Whilst I have a tongue to use, let me use it for thee. By my speech, by my whole conduct, let me not disparage, but recommend thy good ways. Let my temper be chearful, but not light and vain; grave, but not morose or churlish. What if I should [in the coach] be confined to company, among whom is a profane swearer, or one of a filthy conversation, and impudent therein? How should I treat such a one? What if any is a scoffer at religion and religious persons? The Lord give me wisdom, *meekness of wisdom*, that I may not exasperate such, but win them by my conversation. Sinful anger is too apt to rise in such cases; may it be totally suppressed. Pious indignation out of a respect to the glory of God, is a better temper, and even that is too apt to degenerate into sinful anger, flaming out from a regard to self. Let such corrupt conversation always excite in me a holy zeal for the glory of God, an abhorrence of the sin, and

and a religious care that I be not partaker therein; and therefore let these be always mingled with tender pity for the sinner, and with thankfulness for distinguishing grace to myself.—Lord, I would be, where thou wouldst have me to be, and no where else. *Let me not go hence, if thy presence go not with me.* Lead thou the way, and I will follow, where my Father leads. How shall I spend so many days and weeks, agreeably to myself and thee, where I can be so little alone?

“In secret silence of the mind,

“My heaven, and there my God, I find.”

Oh! let me do, or say, nothing whereby thou mayst be dishonoured, and thy good ways discredited. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*



Promoting piety in a young clergyman.

LORD's-day, December 29, 1754. Quite unexpectedly it hath fallen to my lot to ride the south circuit. What a journey of mercies hath this been? I saw nothing but *goodness and mercy following*, and going before me, all the way. The Lord was pleased to engage me in a remarkable piece of service at ———, which indeed was the most memorable event this journey hath produced. On Monday, the 18th past, I visited a friend, who introduced me to the company of his genteel and pious visitors, and we had almost an hour's very agreeable

agreeable conversation. Just as the company was breaking up, came in a young *curate*. My friend whispered me in the ear, "Go, speak to him." I was at first backward, but, at his repeated instigation, I saluted him, and entered into serious talk with him. It pleased God to make something which I dropped, the arrow of his conviction. I saw him no more that night. Next morning he sent for me, just as I was going to take horse, and told me, that our conversation the preceding evening had given him a great deal of concern; that it had put him upon considering the state of his soul more than ever before, that he feared it was bad, and therefore desired my company for a few minutes. My spirits hereby were elevated, especially when, on my blessing God, and rejoicing in hope this was the *beginning of a good work* in his soul, I saw the tears immediately start from his eyes. I talked with him a good while as the Lord enabled me, and then said, Come, do not let us part without prayer. Another clergyman happened to come in, and being of an excellent character, I would have put the office of prayer on him, but he declined it, and they both desired me to pray. So we kneeled down all three together, and the Lord *poured out a spirit of grace and supplication*. I could hear the young clergyman sigh and sob frequently, which did not at all abate the fervour, or blunt the edge of my devotion. When we arose up, he appeared bathed in tears, thanked me most heartily, begged the continuation of my prayers, and that I would write to him. The other clergyman took notice, by what a particular providence he had been brought thither that

that day, which had detained his brother at home, who otherwise had intended to go abroad the preceding day. And I could not but remark, how I had been pressed in spirit to ride seven miles in a stormy evening, by a feeble moon-light, to reach ——— when I did. I took the first opportunity to write to this gentleman, as he desired, and gave him the best instructions I could, and particularly persuaded him to bind himself by covenant to be the Lord's, to write down his resolutions and self-dedication, and sign it with his hand; and begged of him to write to me at London on a given day, and freely to open his heart to me. Accordingly I received from him an epistle, dated the 11th instant, which revived my soul. The arrow seems to stick fast, and he had done (but not before that morning) as I had advised and persuaded him. It should seem, indeed, that nothing but the *balm of Gilead* will heal the wound. It was an arrow from *a bow drawn at a venture*, but an unerring, all-powerful hand carried it to the mark. *The arm of the Lord was revealed.* Glorious grace! which could make so feeble an effort effectual to so glorious a purpose. To his name be all the praise. Let me not dare to ascribe the least part of the praise to the intention or endeavours of a worthless worm. Yet I may, I must rejoice. Heaven rejoices, and so will I. Hallelujah! — Surely here is satisfying evidence of the workings of the Spirit of adoption. What joy hath it afforded me? And the more, because it seems an answer to prayer, when I called together some praying friends a few days before I set out on that journey. I remember my heart was
drawn

drawn out in this particular request, that God would bless my conversation in that journey, and enable me, to speak for him, and make it effectual to some valuable purposes. I was reading, the other morning, an abstract of the life of the Rev. Mr. Stock, in *Gillies's Collections*, where I noted with joy this passage. "It is no small honour for a man to win, if it were but one soul. For to win souls, is, to win more than the whole world is worth. What an honour is it then, to be not only a winner of souls, but a winner of such as prove winners?" I esteem this important event an instance of the greatest honour the Lord ever did me, or perhaps ever will in this life. But as an excellent preacher observed in my hearing, after enumerating a variety of methods the Lord ordinarily useth in bringing home souls to himself, "Any thing will do, when the Lord works." To his infinite power and grace alone be all the praise. Let me not dare to arrogate to myself the least share thereof. But as at first it was the gladness of my heart, when I saw this gentleman's tears, so his letters since have contributed to fulfil my joy. This was well worth all the expence and fatigue of the whole journey, had I no success in my secular affairs. But the Lord prospered me in these also far beyond my expectation, and indeed beyond what I have experienced in any one instance before. To his great name be all the praise, and at his service be all the fruits thereof.*

Happy

* The epistolary correspondence between Mr. Williams and this clergyman was kept up during the little remainder of Mr. Williams's



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Happy temper at the Lord's-table.

LORD's-day evening, January 5, 1755. O what sweet moments have I had at the table of the Lord this day! Of a truth Jesus was there, and made me to know it. How did it warm my heart? How did my heart burn within me? Such a season I have not enjoyed, I think, since the memorable August 26, 1744, and November 3, 1745. Adored be the glorious Master of the feast, for this token of love. To him mine eye was directed through the whole administration. *His name is as ointment poured forth. He shall be to me as a bundle of myrrh.*

“For ever his dear sacred name

“Shall dwell upon my tongue,

“And Jesus and salvation be

“The close of every song.”



Meditation among the tombs.

TUESDAY-morning, March 4, 1755. Walking this morning in the church-yard, I have been

Williams's life: and had such a valuable life been protracted to a much longer date, their correspondence would no doubt have been continued. For ever since Mr. *Williams's* death, this worthy clergyman retains the highest esteem for his memory, as the happy instrument of his new and divine life. And in the several parishes where providence hath since called him to exercise his ministry, particularly in his present vicarage, he hath given abundant evidences of persevering piety, and of great faithfulness to the souls committed to him. 1778.

been considering the days of my youth, and particularly reflecting on the generation which hath ever since been gathering to the generation of their fathers. This I observe, that the remembrance of one who was eminently humble and holy, whether rich or poor, *is as a precious ointment*, it spreads a sweetness on my mind, and impresses it with a veneration for the memory of such a one. They are high in my esteem. Not so those who were distinguished only by their greatness, their riches, their worldly wisdom, or their sparkling wit. When I recollect my ideas of such, or read their epitaphs, I am ready to shake my head, and think, “ Ah ! but where are they now ? What is become of all their greatness and grandeur ? *Where is the house of the prince ? And where are the dwelling places of the wicked ?*” — When I think of men of the most shining parts, but who with all their knowledge knew not the Lord, they move my pity. Some of them have left behind them writings, which excite admiration in their readers, and will do so for ages yet to come ; but of what use is their fame for wit or learning ? What a pitiable case is it, to be honoured where they are not ; and despised, insulted, tormented where they are ? I find neither riches nor poverty, beauty or deformity, make any difference in my estimation of the dead. Their works of piety and charity, their humbleness of mind, meekness and shining holiness, or the want of these, are the things which make the main difference in the sensations I feel, when reflecting on them. I have been considering also, why it is thus ? And the chief reason I can think

think of is this, because the good effects of these things are abiding, when the others are vanished and gone. These *follow them*, and are gone with them to their present state in the unseen world, and attend them in a glorious eternity. Well said the wise man therefore, *Wisdom is the principal thing, get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.*

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His superiority to the world.

October 4, 1755. [To the Rev. Mr. Darracott.]

Very dear Sir,

IT is far from being the least of the mercies our bountiful Lord is pouring out upon me, that I have such a friend as you, now and then to warm my heart with a literary communication. Indeed I have many such friends, and not a few among the established clergy. Strange revolution! May the Lord make them a thousand times as many! Blessed be his name, he hath, I trust, given me to fit loose to the world, so that I cannot love it, and do not care how little I have to do in the concerns of it; nor does any thing but a sense of duty, for ought I know, engage me to spend the hours I do spend therein; and yet he is filling my cup, and making it to run over more than ever. I am sometimes ready to think, he is heaping worldly favours upon me, as if these were to be all my portion, and I were to have all my good things here. But "I am resolved, by his grace,"

as Luther said, when offered a *Cardinal's Hat*,
“ the Lord Jesus Christ shall not put me off with
“ such trifles.” I am resolved, his grace enabling
me, how much soever he gives me of the good
things of this life, to give him all again. They
will very well serve the purposes, for which he
bestows them; but they will not serve me for
a portion. The Lord, I praise him, hath given
me a constitution, that will not be satisfied with
such husks; I must have more substantial meat,
such as the saints in glory love; yea, such as
angels eat. Dead be my heart to all below.
These things, well laid out, will *make me friends*;
even friends that *will receive me into everlasting*
habitations; but if they are held fast, and grasped
hard, they will but delude my hopes, fail my ex-
pectation, and wound the hand that holds them.
It cheers and delights my heart, that the Lord hath
made me one of his almoners. O may I obtain
grace of him to be faithful in that office; that
when I am called to give up my account, I may
do it with joy, and not with grief or shame! What
have we to do but follow where our Father leads,
keep in his way, and *keep ourselves in his love*, de-
voting all to him, from whom we receive all? I
am, &c. J. W.

*His patience under severe pains.*

Bath, November 5, 1755. [To a gentleman at London; Mr. Williams wrote the following letter.]

Dear Sir,

HERE I am the Lord's prisoner, but *a prisoner of hope*. It will be a fortnight to morrow since I left home. My divine Master arrested me on his own day, whilst sitting under a sermon at ———. There I got cold, and was seized with a pain across the reins. It was tolerable a day or two, but increased till my patience had full exercise. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday I spent at *Bristol*, full of pain day and night, but not without some merciful intermissions. Perhaps some of the lively *Israelitish* women, and possibly some of our own country, have brought forth their first-born with throws less excruciating, less sinking of their spirits, than those which oppressed mine in numerous instances. Yet I still believed all was mercy, and could bless the hand that smote me, resigning myself intirely to his disposal. It was a vast satisfaction to me, whilst he *chastened me with pain upon my bed, and the multitude of my bones with strong pain*, to believe, as Dr. Watts sings,

“ He knows the pain his servants feel,

“ He hears his children cry,

“ And

“ And their best wishes to fulfil

“ His grace is ever nigh.”

Particularly on Thursday-night, when my pains were a full trial to my patience, he gave me a sensible, surprizing, chearing proof that he was awake as well as I. For when my pains grew almost insupportable, and I lay mingling with my groans such cries as these — Lord Jesus, is it not enough? Lord Jesus, are not thy compassions infinite? Lord Jesus, I have none to fly to, none to pity, none to help me but thyself. How easily canst thou succour me? Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt. Glorify thyself in me, by me, upon me; but *remember that I am dust.* Crush me not as *the moth*, &c.—Presently my pains abated. As the Dr. sings,

“ With pitying eyes, the Prince of grace

“ Beheld my helpless grief;

“ He saw, and (O amazing love !)

“ He ran to my relief.”

He commanded ease to return in a few minutes. But O how was I ravished with his condescending kindness! How did my soul praise him, and resolve to praise him as long as I lived! Nor have I been tried with such exquisite pains since.—Friday evening I rode hither in pain. Next morning I consulted my friend Dr. *Davies*. By following his directions in bathing and pumping, I now have only a sensibility where the pains were. I cannot tell you how much mercy I see in this visitation. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless*

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his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who not only forgiveth all thine iniquities, but who healeth all thy diseases. — Believe me to be, with great respect, your much obliged, cordial friend, and humble servant for Jesus sake, J. W.



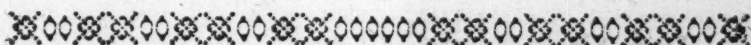
His benefit from Bath-waters.

Bath, November 7, 1755. [To a gentleman at Cirencester, Mr. Williams wrote.]

Dear Sir,

THE Lord hath dealt very graciously with me. These two last mornings I continue well, and to morrow, with the Doctor's leave, I prosecute my journey. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.* Shall he not have the praise? Shall tribes of diseased mortals, who are repairing hither from all parts, all the year round, drinking health, and washing away their pains and weaknesses, in this choice, this redundant preparation, this fountain which, like its glorious author, is ever-flowing and overflowing, go away, like *nine of the ten lepers*, and never acknowledge the great physician, the most sublime chymist? Shall scarcely one in ten turn back, and glorify God? Instead of that, shall they, at least numbers of them, spend their days in luxury, and much of the night in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in gaming and sinful pastimes? And still
are

are the virtues of the water continued? O the boundless patience of our God! Unwearied forbearance! Goodness immense! And grace inexhaustible! Shall we be of the number of these blind, ungrateful mortals? Forbid it, mighty God! Shall we not trace him, and see him, in all his works of wonder and grace? Yes, and our souls shall bless him, and love him, and fear him, and trust in him, and be wholly devoted and resigned to his will, his good, his sovereign will and pleasure. I am, dear Sir, very respectfully your's, J. W.



His increasing bodily weakness.

Maidenhead, December 6, 1755. [To his daughter, Mrs. Winter, Mr. Williams wrote as follows.]

My dear Sally,

VERY glad I should be to see you, Mr. Winter, and the children the Lord hath graciously given you, if it were his gracious will. I think he hath not said, "Go into London this journey." No, if I at all understand his voice, it is, "Make haste, and get home, lest thy strength, which is already much weakened in the way, should fail thee in the way, and thou fall into the hands of thou knowest not who." Indeed I dare not enter into London. Yet, I think, I should not fear that, or any thing else, could I see providence calling

calling me to undertake it. At present I sensibly feel that he forbids me. Indeed I have had a sickly stomach some weeks, *and the strong men begin to bow themselves,* and that not only when going up stairs, or up-hill, but even upon the plain. I am not able to walk *London-streets*; but am desirous, if it be the will of God, to ride home. I think I have told you enough, when I have added, *through the grace of God, none of these things move me. For I know that my Redeemer liveth. And I know whom I have believed.* Perhaps he will strengthen me again. If not, *Father, not my will, but thine be done.* — The Lord be with you all. Pray and praise for, (my dear,) your affectionate father, whilst

J. W.

(***)

His dying comforts.

Windsor, Lord's-day, December 7. 1755. [This was the last letter he ever wrote, and was directed to his wife.]

My dearest,

IF the Lord will, I shall be at *Kidderminster* soon after this reaches your hands. But if it be his will, I should never reach that dear place of my nativity, his will be done. It hath long been my earnest desire and prayer, that I may have no other will but my Father's; but that, he alone can give, and I trust he hath given it me in part, and I trust he will give it me more intirely, and that *as my day,*

day, so shall my strength be also. If it be his will, I would gladly return from whence I came, either to recover strength, or to die, as pleaseth my dear Father which is in heaven. But if it please him, who said, *Take Aaron up to mount Hor, and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there,* to say, “ Let Joseph Williams die on the road, or “ at Windsor, or Beaconsfield, or Wickham, or Oxford, or wheresoever ;” who dares say against it ? I desire to say still, and in every case, *Father, not my will, but thine be done.* I am glad my will is made, touching the disposal of my earthly goods. — Should it please him to weaken my strength the next four days, as he hath done the last four days, I think I shall not be able to hold out unto the end. — And who knows, but on this day of rest I may receive fresh supplies of strength ? Nothing is too hard for the Lord. But, indeed, at present I am scarce able to rise out of my chair.

The great Apostle saith, *But we had the sentence* (or as it is in the margin, the answer) *of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.* I cannot say absolutely, that I have the sentence of death in myself, in the sense in which I there understand the Apostle. For he had just before said, *We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.* I cannot say, that my views of the symptoms of my present disorder amount to a despair of life, or of recovery ; and yet I cannot think it wholly improbable, that I have the symptoms of an approaching *diabetes*, which may prove incurable, and may bring on an *atrophy* (which I think to be

already begun, for my body and limbs are considerably shrunk) and so this animal frame may, in a few months, or weeks, or days, pine away, be dissolved, and die. At least, I think, I have ground enough to suppose this may be the case, and upon such a supposition to consider what I have to do, whilst life and breath remain. Indeed, my dearest, my heart is sensibly touched in respect of you. And yet you need not much wonder, if my thoughts appear to be much engrossed about my own self, my future self, my eternal self. Especially as this is the Lord's-day, and I cannot go to church, partly through weakness, and partly as I am continually spitting up white, tough phlegm. Let me therefore talk to myself.

Most certainly this animal frame is frail and mortal, though my soul is immortal. Why? because my Father, *the Father of spirits*, hath said, "Let it be immortal." But he hath appointed unto men once to die. And what if the time of my departure draweth nigh? What if I am to be exercised, as I have been for many days past, with loss of appetite, frequent defluxions, fits of sickness even unto vomiting, and growing weakness, till this body, late so active and sprightly, is quite emaciated and enfeebled, and become no longer tenantable for my immortal spirit? This could not be my case, had not my Father appointed it should be so. *My days are determined, the number of my months is with him, he hath appointed my bounds, which I cannot pass.* And why should I desire to pass them? No, I do not, would not, will not desire it. Under whatever exercises of sickness and pain, it becomes me to say,
and

and let me say it with my whole heart, and with the full consent of my will, *Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Certainly it is my interest to trust, not in myself, but in God who raiseth the dead. How else shall I bear with patience and with becoming resignation, the painful, tedious unwinding of the thread of life? How shall I kiss the rod, but by hearing it, and him who doth appoint it? Lord, increase my faith. Lord, help my unbelief.

But in this view of my case, how shall I be thankful enough to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? How shall I bless him enough, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? A lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me? And to a lively hope, that I am kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation? And that herein I can greatly rejoice, though now for a season, as need is, I am in heaviness through manifold trials?

In this view of my case, what should I do? Or, what could support my spirits, if I had hope in this life only? What though a bountiful providence hath blessed me with more than enough to fulfil all my engagements? What though I have seen all my children comfortably settled? What though no man can be happier than I in a dear, tender, dutiful wife? What can all these things do for a dying man? I ask again, What can all these temporary comforts do for a dying man, were they ten times as many, and comforting, as they are?

I suppose myself a dying man; and, upon such

a supposition, what can possibly stand me in stead? I read in *St. John's Revelation*, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.* And that this he heard by a voice from heaven. Should I not hereupon enquire, what is all this to me? What is it to *die in the Lord*? It is to die, united to Christ by faith, firmly believing in him, and that both as *able to save to the uttermost*, and as equally willing to save. Shall I thus *die in the Lord*? Do I *live in the Lord*, and *to the Lord*? *The life that I now live in the flesh, do I live by the faith of the Son of God*? Do I *do all that I do, whether in word, or in deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*? Do I by lively actings of faith receive all my supplies, in the religious life, out of his *fulness*, and from him as the ever-flowing, over-flowing fountain of all grace? Do I *do all with an eye to his glory*, daily and continually devoting, resigning, and consecrating all he doth, or shall, bestow on me to his service and disposal? If not, what, or where, are those *works* which shall *follow me*? Or, of what avail shall any works of mine, that shall follow me, be to my eternal salvation? I apprehend, that none of those works of mine, that shall follow me, can avail me any thing, otherwise than as evidences of my sincere love to Christ, and unfeigned faith in him. And so I understand the sovereign judge, when foretelling the process of the last judgment. *Come ye blessed, &c. for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c.* that is, ye evidenced your love to me, and faith in me, by relieving, for my sake, those who

who loved me, and stood in need of your help. If this be a right sense of those important words, I humbly trust many works shall follow me, of which I shall *not be ashamed* at that glorious, glorifying day, that great day of retribution; even then, when *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* I have a chearful, soul-reviving hope, that, even then, the glorious Lamb, whose coming I joyfully expect, whose name is now as ointment poured forth, and who is my refuge in every time of need, my Lord, and my God, my Saviour and my friend, my Jesus, and my all, will shew me a pleased, smiling countenance.

“ Then will he own my worthless name.

“ Before his Father’s face,

“ And in the new Jerusalem

“ Appoint my soul a place.”

Certainly *my conscience beareth me witness*, before the Lord, that I have relieved many, *in the name of disciples*, and upon no other consideration than a charitable hope, that they were lovers of Christ, and interested in his love. Certainly *my conscience beareth me witness*, that I have long since, absolutely and intirely, devoted to the Lord Christ, and to his interest, all that he hath entrusted me with; yea, every day have I endeavoured and designed afresh to consecrate to him, and his service, all I

am, and all I have, resolving by his grace to render to him whatever his providence asks for, be it more or less. Long since he hath clearly shewed me, that as *I came naked* into this world, and that consequently all I am possessed of is the free gift of his bounty and kind providence, therefore all I have is his own, and sacred to him, and to his sovereign will and pleasure. And his promises assure me, I shall not, I cannot, be a loser by whatever I do for him.

Not that my Lord forbids me, or restrains me, from freely using whatever may contribute to my own present comfort, *for he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.* Nor doth he restrain me from providing for my own, but commands me to *provide*, according to my ability, *for those especially who are of my own house.* Yet he expects I should eye, and observe the calls of his providence, and obey them, *not grudging* to give whatever he seems to demand of me, either to the relief of his people's wants, or for the furtherance and prosperity of his gospel. How far I have acted by this rule, the last great day will in the best manner declare. Undoubtedly in many things *I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Yet in the main, and believing him to be *the Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c.* I dare lodge my appeal with him, *who searcheth the hearts and the reins,* that he doth know it hath been my desire and design to *honour the Lord with my substance, &c.*

Nevertheless, I freely own, that I draw my brightest evidences, and ~~draw~~ *cherish* my liveliest hopes, not so much from what I have done for him, as from

from what he hath done for me, and in me, and by me. Certainly I experienced the mighty power of his grace, changing and renewing my heart, in the days of my youth, when aged about *seven een* or *eighteen*, drawing me to hate what I naturally loved, and to love what I naturally hated. Certainly he *turned me, and I was turned*, in a great measure, from those vanities and lusts in which my heart had long delighted. In numberless instances he hath cheared my heart with the smiles of his reconciled face, and hath *shed abroad that love* of his, *which is better than wine*. Certainly, in very numerous instances, he hath enabled me to *rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*; and many times on account of immediate answers to prayer. And the brighter and fuller the discoveries of his love have been, he, and he alone doth know, the more deeply have I been made to humble myself at his feet; yea, to *abhor myself and repent*, as it were, *in dust and ashes*. Nor is there any thing I have been more desirous, or even ambitious of, these many years, than to lie, and always lie at the foot of the cross of Christ, in the lowliest submission and prostration of soul, sensible that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing, and at the same time to see myself *complete in him*. Surely nothing have I desired more, or more fervently, than that he would make me humble and keep me always humble. Nor hath any consideration tended more to reconcile my spirit to this afflictive dispensation, than this hope, that the Lord is hearing my 305
prayers, and granting me the thing I wished for. 22

Indeed,

Indeed, I scarce know what method could be more effectual, than that he hath taken, to humble me to the dust, and make me sensible I am nothing in his hands, but what he makes me to be. Let him therefore humble me, and spare not. Only, dearest Lord, give me submission, give me patience, give me always to see thy hand in every affliction, give me always to lie at thy feet, without a murmuring word, or a repining thought. O give me to accept the punishment of my sins.

Do not imagine, my dearest, I write these things to grieve you, but to glorify God. O how dear is Christ now to my soul! I hope my christian friends pray for me. I can do but little of that work myself. But, blessed be his name, I can cast myself at his feet, and say, (I think, with my whole heart) as holy *Baxter* did, "Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt." *The Spirit*, I hope, beareth witness with my spirit, that *I am the child of God*; and the same Spirit, in many of my fellow christians, beareth the same witness. Nor am I ashamed to own, I take pleasure and comfort in the good opinion of the godly. To stand so high in their esteem, as their many letters witness, contributes not a little to the clearing my evidences, the brightening of my hopes, and elevating of my joy in the Lord.

Now then, O my soul, what remains for me to do all the residue of my days, but first of all to extol and praise him, *who hath saved me, and called me with a holy calling*; and not only so, but hath given me to eat of the hidden manna; and
not

not only so, but hath given me a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows but myself. O what is hell, to be delivered from, and to know that I am delivered! O what is heaven, to be the place and state of our advancement, and to know that we are denizens of the new Jerusalem!

And in the next place, should I not speak of him, and recommend his good ways to all around me? And that, even whilst he is *weakening my strength in the way, and shortening my days?* What though he crush my feeble frame, though my days be spent with grief, and my hours with sighing? What though I chatter like a crane, or a swallow, and mourn like a dove, that my age is departed, and is removed from me like a shepherd's tent, that I have cut off like a weaver my life, that he will cut me off with pining sickness, and from day even to night will make an end of me? Is it not enough, that, in Christ Jesus the Lord, he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure? This is all my salvation. Be this all my desire. Is it not matter of abounding joy, that I can sing, with appropriating faith, Dr. Doddridge's 22d hymn?

“ 'Tis mine, the covenant of his grace;

“ And every promise mine!

“ All sprung from everlasting love,

“ And seal'd by blood divine.

“ On my unworthy favour'd head

“ Its blessings all unite;

“ Blessings

- “ Blessings more num’rous than the stars,
“ More lasting, and more bright.
“ Death, thou mayst tear this rag of flesh,
“ And sink my fainting head,
“ And lay my ruins in the grave,
“ Among my kindred-dead.
“ But death and hell in vain shall strive
“ To break that sacred rest,
“ Which God’s expiring children feel,
“ When leaning on his breast.
“ Th’ enlarged soul thou canst not reach,
“ Nor rend from Christ away;
“ Though o’er my mould’ring dust thou boast,
“ The triumphs of a day.
“ The night is past, my morning dawns,
“ My covenant-God descends,
“ And wakes that dust to join my soul
“ In bliss that never ends.
“ That covenant the last accent claims
“ Of this poor fault’ring tongue;
“ And that shall the first notes employ
“ Of my celestial song.”

Farewell, my dearest. I hope to see you again. But if not, all is well. We shall spend a long, a joyful eternity at our Father’s house together. If separate spirits may have the honour of *ministering spirits*, how gladly would I be a witness to your secret devotions, and (if possible) an assistant? And how gladly would I receive your expiring spirit, in order to convoy and present it at the foot of the eternal

eternal throne? But how little do I yet know of these things? Yet *a little while*, and we shall know ten million times more than is yet known by your poor, loving, rejoicing,

*Joseph Williams.**

* Mr. *Williams* was in perfect health, when he left home, October 22, 1755. His illness began in less than a week after, which induced him to use the *Bath-waters*, under the direction of an eminent physician there of his intimate acquaintance, and he appeared to be so well recovered, that he left *Bath*, November 10, to prosecute his journey. But after the gradual advance of every threatening symptom, he wrote the above letter to his wife, which she received, December 17, about an hour before he himself was brought home in a chaise. His complaints terminated in a *letbargy*, of which he died on Lord's-day morning, December 27, about a month after he had compleated the *sixty-third* year of his age.

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